

LECTURES IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY

BY

R. J. GEORGE

SECOND SERIES



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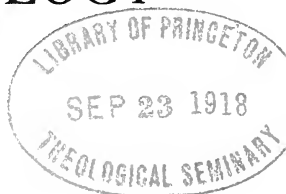


# LECTURES IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY

BY

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SECOND SERIES

PASTOR AND PEOPLE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

By REV. PROF. D. B. WILLSON, D.D.

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TO  
WILLIAM SLATER



## FOREWORD

*Rev. W. McLeod George, the writer of the Foreword for the First Series of these Lectures, passed away on the 29th of September, 1912.*

*In writing this Foreword, it is with the memory of many years as an associate of the author — in the days of his student life in the Seminary, and also during the period of his professorship here.*

*Many fresh from University studies, take chairs as teachers of the on-coming ministry, and knowing naught of the joys and sorrows of Pastoral Care. This teacher had served many years as a pastor, and had gathered to himself the love of an attached people. He was an under-shepherd of the Great Shepherd of the sheep. He was a faithful shepherd; and these Lectures enter into the details of a pastor's life in a way that cannot but be helpful to pastors and people.*

D. B. WILLSON.

*Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary,  
Pittsburgh, Pa.*



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PART I

THE PASTOR  
IN RELATION TO THE ACTIVITIES  
OF THE CONGREGATION



## SECOND SERIES

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### LECTURE I

#### ORGANIZING FOR WORK

THE general subject of the course of lectures in Pastoral Theology the present year will be: The Pastor in Relation to the Activities of the Church.

A congregation is to be viewed as a band of workers in the Lord's vineyard with the pastor at the head. In the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God, the pastor is to be not only a builder, but a wise Master-Builder whose business it is to lay out the work and direct the efforts of the workmen. "For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch." (Mark xiii, 34.) There is a vast amount of unused moral power in the church to-day, and the minister who can call out this latent talent and direct it into channels of useful service confers an immense blessing on the workers and gives a mighty impulse to the work.

"All at it, and always at it" is a good motto for pastor and people.

#### I

*The Advantages of Having a Congregation Well Organized for Work.*

1. It adds the strength of the people to that of the pastor.

Dr. Thomas Guthrie said, that, as he looked over

his congregation, three solemn thoughts passed through his mind: "first, What a great variety of spiritual needs these people have; second, What solemn changes a few years will make among them; third, What vast resources of power and possibilities for usefulness are here!"

Young gentlemen, however gifted one may be as a preacher, he is not successful as a pastor unless he can arouse this moral force to action, and direct it to systematic effort in upbuilding the Kingdom of God. He is not a great general who is merely a skillful swordsman. He must have ability to organize an army, to direct the movements of battalions, and brigades, and regiments; to command the ready obedience of all his under officers, and to inspire the rank and file of his soldiery with enthusiasm, courage, and devotion.

The pastoral office demands the faculty of leadership. No amount of personal effort will make up for the lack of ability to organize a working force; and a ministry, otherwise weak, may become powerful by being able to command the strength of the people.

Dr. Wilcox, in *The Pastor and His Flock*, says: "There is some danger that you young theologues may, yourselves, underrate the importance of setting your people at work. You may feel strong and able to carry things along, whether your people bestir themselves or not. You have little idea of the folly of that. Did you ever put a bright reflector behind a gas burner? Did you notice how it doubled the light? Your people are the reflector behind you. Lives from them that harmonize with words from you will double the power of the words. It is a good rule in church work to do nothing yourself, that you can get some one else to do well."

2. Christian work develops the talents and increases the graces of the people.

The Pastor who does all the work himself wrongs the flock. He deprives them of one of the highest privileges of the gospel, *viz*, the privilege of service. Talents increase by use. Grace grows by exercise. It is perilous to the soul to be awakened to a sense of duty and then fail to perform it. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" is the natural inquiry of a new-born soul; and woe to the pastor who has no reply to give! Experience shows that the workers are the growing members of a congregation, and that the drones die.

3. Work promotes the peace of a congregation.

An elder, being asked the secret of the long-continued peace of his congregation, answered: "Our Pastor has kept us so busy working that we have had no time to fight." That is the true Christian philosophy. "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." Keep the people walking or they will fall to lusting.

It is unnecessary to speak further of the advantages of organization. Enough has been said to show, that, to be good pastors, you must be good organizers. Some have much more of the faculty than others. The more you have of it, the more encouragement you have to exercise it; and the less you have of it, the more you need to cultivate what you have.

Granting the necessity for organization, how shall the pastor proceed? To a certain extent, the congregation is organized when the pastor is placed over it: it has its Board of Elders; and should have its Board of Deacons. But there still remains a two-fold work of organization: *viz*, organizing the officers for systematic, official work; and organizing the people for actual service, under the officers. We will consider these in their order.

## II

*Organizing the Eldership.*

Murphy says: "To the Elders of the Church, properly belongs the management of its spiritual affairs, but that is not by any means the whole of their duty. They are also to be leaders in the various activities for which the united body of God's people is responsible. It is their duty to be the counselors of the pastor in devising and putting into operation plans for the better carrying on of the Lord's work. In the session, properly, should originate efforts—and some of them should be originating constantly—for inciting, and vigorously conducting, the work of the Church. By the Elders, preëminently, should the activity be carried forward as well as supervised." If this is true, and it is true, the pastor's work as an organizer must begin with the eldership.

1. The pastor should use his influence to secure a large session.

Of course I mean large in proportion to the size of the congregation. It is the business of the session to determine when there shall be an increase of its members. There is often a disposition to avoid an election of elders, lest the peace of the congregation should be disturbed. Some pastors prefer to have a small session, because they think it is easier to control. This policy is not ordinarily the best. The advantages of a large session are:

- a. It is more representative of the whole congregation.

It often happens that where two or three leading family connections control the session for generations, other families remain in obscurity and manifest little interest in the work of the congregation, because they have no representative in its counsels. This is a loss of power.

- b. It gives greater weight to the decisions of the session.

It is very important that the decisions of a church court command the confidence and respect of all subject to its authority. This can hardly be expected when two or three elders undertake to legislate for a large congregation.

- c. It enlists more minds in planning and more hands in working.

It is very desirable that plans for church work be originated and matured in the session. If the session is feeble and the congregation is strong and vigorous, it will always be found that the army will outrun its officers. This inevitably results in confusion. It is not only in planning but in working that the advantage is seen. The more you can enlist in formulating the plans, the more will be ready to coöperate in executing them.

- d. It lightens the responsibilities of the pastor.

The pastor who lends his influence to keep the session small in order that he may be able to control its decisions, is simply loading himself with responsibility. When everything is running smoothly, this one-man power may be very convenient; but when difficulties arise, as in differences of view about church policy, or unhappy cases of discipline, the pastor may be glad to share the responsibility with a good strong board of elders.

If I were asked as to the number of elders desirable, I should say, that, there should be three elders for the first twenty-five members; and an additional elder for every twenty-five additional members; so that, if there were one hundred members, there would be six elders; if two hundred members, there would be ten elders; after that, I would add one elder for every fifty or one hundred members.

2. The pastor should instruct the elders as to their duties.

Many unwarranted criticisms are made on the efficiency of the eldership. Elders undertake grave responsibilities as members of church courts and as shepherds of the flock. They are expected to visit the sick, and to counsel the erring, and to feed the lambs and to perform many of the most delicate and difficult duties along with the pastor; and yet they are thrust into it without previous instruction or training, while the pastor has spent years in preparation for his work. It is due them that the pastor kindly and carefully unfold to them the duties of their office.

The young minister should be modest about assuming to know more about sessional business and pastoral work, when he is just entering upon it, than elders who have been in the exercise of their office for a score of years. They have a better acquaintance with the field than he has, and possibly a religious experience deeper than his own. He must not assume too much superior wisdom or they may reply in the words of Eliphaz the Temanite: "With us are both the grayheaded and very aged men, much elder than thy father." (Job xv, 10.) But might it not be a very helpful thing, when young men are chosen to the eldership, if the pastor should say to them: "You have a great many difficult duties in common with me. We had instruction in the Seminary concerning our duties as connected with church courts, and with the Sabbath school and prayer-meeting, as to pastoral visitation, visiting the sick and dealing with the unconverted; and I should be glad to study it over with you, and to give you the benefit of the suggestions given to me." Such a proposal would find a ready response and would bring pastor and youthful elders into very close sympathy in their church work.



3. There should be regular meetings of session.

It is useless to talk about regular systematic work without this. In the country congregations quarterly meetings should be held, and in towns and cities the meetings should be monthly.

4. The congregation should be districted among the elders.

- a. There may be as many districts as there are elders.
- b. The division may be made geographically or by families.
- c. To promote acquaintance, the elders may exchange districts.

5. The district elder should have definite duties.

- a. To have personal acquaintance with all the families in his district.
- b. To visit the sick, and report to the session cases of sickness.
- c. To find out those anxious about their souls, or in danger of temptation, or out of the way.
- d. To see that all attend ordinances, prayer-meeting, Sabbath school, and class meetings.

Some of the young people's societies have Look-out committees. Some good is done by them, and some harm, but they cannot take the place of the elders in the spiritual oversight of the flock.

- e. Each district elder should report at each meeting of the session.

6. The session should have some standing committees.

- a. *A prayer-meeting committee.* The duties of this committee would be: (1) To select leaders; (2) To select subjects; (3) To arrange cottage prayer-meetings; (4) To promote interest in all prayer-meetings.
- b. *A committee on Sabbath Schools.* The duties of this committee would be: (1) To **plan**

for the growth of the school. Every congregation has some persons who ought to be in the Sabbath school and are not. Judicious management would bring in many of them. (2) To counsel with the superintendent in the choice of teachers; (3) To assist in grading the school; (4) To make provision for the instruction of inquirers.

- c. *A committee on music.* (1) To provide training in music for the congregation; (2) To provide Psalm-books or Psalters; (3) To secure proper leaders.

### III

#### *The Inspiration to Work.*

Spiritual devotion is never hurtful to work, but work is sometimes hard on spiritual devotion. Too much engrossing social work throughout the week may bring the pastor into the pulpit on Sabbath morning in a doubting, fretful, scolding frame of mind, than which nothing can be more deadening. Let time be reserved, after the disheartening labors with human nature, for intimate communion with the divine nature; and however impossible you have found the people, come into your pulpit with a full sense of the truth that with God all things are possible. Work hard, but be serene in the assurance that the increase is with God, and bring this mood into your pulpit every Sabbath morning.

## LECTURE II

### ORGANIZING FOR WORK (*Continued*)

THERE is one department of congregational work which has not received the consideration which its importance demands. I mean the financial department. Works on Pastoral Theology, as a rule, contain little on this subject. It is only in recent years that Church courts have given it attention. The consequence is that congregational church work has declined for lack of financial support; suitable provision is not made for pastors, and the salary promised is often far in arrears; while the public schemes of the church languish for the lack of means. In the meantime, God's people grow fat of purse and lean of soul. The Scriptures declare (Prov. xi, 25): "The liberal soul shall be made fat;" and Paul exhorts: "Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." (2 Cor. viii, 7.)

Following in the line of the last lecture I announce as the Fourth General Point:

#### IV

##### *Organizing a Financial Board.*

- I. The elders, in ordinary cases, should not be the financial managers of the congregation.
  - a. Because the qualifications for the two offices are entirely distinct.

A man may be an excellent elder, and yet be worse than useless as a financial officer.

- b. The duties of the two offices are liable to conflict.

No argument is necessary to show that it would be unwise for the pastor to involve himself in the financial management of the congregation, because it would interfere with the discharge of his pastoral duties. With the exception of the pastor's salary, the same principles apply to the eldership.

- c. Either office is enough for one man.

The men who fill offices in the Church are usually busy men. They serve without compensation and are compelled to give most of their attention to their worldly affairs. It is therefore unwise to ask one man to fill two offices, of such importance and so entirely distinct.

- d. The work should be distributed.

This is according to the Gospel. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. vi, 2.) "For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened." (2 Cor. viii, 13.) Both the labors and the honors in a congregation should be distributed.

2. If possible, have a Board of Deacons.

I say "if possible," because there are some things that are not possible with men; and one of these may be the securing of a Board of Deacons in an anti-deacon congregation. One of our ministers of masterly ability once declared to me, "*I will have them.*" But he did not "have them." For while he was able to press the congregation to the point of electing them, when the persons chosen absolutely refused to serve, he was powerless. I do not advise disturbing the peace of a congregation on this subject, but there are good reasons why a pastor should labor to this end.

- a. Because this is a Scriptural office.

The New Testament designates this office as in-

stituted in the Apostolic Church; it prescribes the qualifications for the office; it prescribes the manner of induction into the office; it defines the duties belonging to the office; and gives the example of the choice and ordination of the first deacons. Acts vi, 1-8; 1 Tim. iii, 8-13.

- b. It is in accordance with the standards of our Church.

"The Scripture doth hold out deacons as distinct officers in the Church, whose office is perpetual." (*Book of Discipline*, page 24.) The controversy in our Church on the Deacon question was not so much on the Scripturalness of the office as on the extent of its powers.

3. Endeavor to have the Board of Deacons thoroughly organized.

The relation of the pastor to the Board of Deacons is not by any means the same as his relation to the session. By virtue of his office as pastor, he is moderator of the session, but he is not even a member of the Board of Deacons.

- a. The Board of Deacons is a self-organizing body. It chooses its own officers, usually electing them annually.
- b. The regular officers are: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.

In some congregations, the congregation elects a treasurer who may or may not be a member of the Board of Deacons. When this is done, the Board of Deacons need not elect a treasurer.

- c. There should be one standing committee, i. e., on the care of the poor.

"The poor ye have always with you," says Christ. There are few congregations that have no poor. The first demand for deacons was to take care of the poor, and it is one of the most sacred duties of their office.

Special committees may be appointed as required.

4. Seek to have a well-planned financial system. There are various systems of finance in use in the Church. One method is to depend entirely upon the voluntary offerings of the people, with no subscriptions binding to any definite amount, and no account taken of individual contributions. Another method is by subscriptions made annually and paid at stated times—weekly, monthly, or quarterly. A third method is by subscriptions made in advance and payment made by envelope. A fourth method is by voluntary contributions through the envelope, accompanied with the name of the donor, and credit on the treasurer's book, with a quarterly, semi-annual or annual report of the amount given by each one. Perhaps no one system is suited to every locality. A system in order to be good must possess the following requisites:

a. It should secure the equalization of burdens.

No system is good which allows half the congregation to shirk paying.

b. It should secure the prompt payment of the pastor's salary, and other current expenses.

Many congregations permit their pastor's salary to fall far in arrears. It is a species of dishonesty. It often works great hardship to the minister and injury to the people. I remember to have seen a suggestive picture in a barber-shop. It was of a dead watchdog. Its legend ran— "Old Trust is dead: poor pay killed him." It would make a not inappropriate epitaph over the graves of some faithful pastors.

c. It should secure the full support of the Public Schemes of the Church.

When appropriations are made by the Supreme Judiciary for the carrying forward of the Church's public work, they constitute a moral obligation, binding upon the congregations. Any financial scheme

which fails to provide for the meeting of this obligation is fatally defective.

- d. There should be business-like methods of keeping accounts.

Great harm is done by carelessness in this particular. It is important, in forming a financial system, to avoid unnecessary burdens in the way of book-keeping, on an unsalaried treasurer; but whatever the system the bookkeeping should be accurate and business-like.

- e. It should furnish to the people full information as to the use made of their money.

There is a reasonable demand on the part of the people to know what is done with their offerings, and money should follow the will of the donors. Strenuous opposition is sometimes made to the publishing of reports of the contributions by individual members, on the ground that it is contrary to the Saviour's command: "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." I knew such a case where a prominent elder withheld his contributions altogether on this plea. A brother elder in explaining this elder's opposition to the publishing of the quarterly reports, said: "Mr. Blank does not want to let his left hand know that his right hand is not doing anything." After all, this is the secret of much of the opposition to a public exhibit of the finances of a congregation.

Finally, give liberally yourself, and make the people give. It is their life. Murphy, in his "Pastoral Theology," says: "A great problem of practical importance which in every quarter now presses for solution is, how the liberality of Christians may be brought up to anything like its capabilities or to the crying demands of the perishing millions. Unbounded means are in the hands of the people of God. Vastly more of them could be expended in a most advan-

tageous manner. The need for them which is developed in almost every department of Christian enterprise is appalling. How then can the consciences of the professed people of God be so aroused that they will look upon the matter as pressing upon them, and feel their responsibility as they ought? How can they be persuaded to believe God fully when he commands, "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over shall men give unto your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again!"

## V

### *Organizing the Congregation.*

1. The congregation may be incorporated.

It is the judgment of many that all our congregations should be incorporated. It is thought to give greater security in holding their property; where this is done the charter must, of course, conform to the laws of the commonwealth; and the congregation must strictly observe the terms of its charter. This usually prescribes the number of its financial officers and the manner of calling meetings for the transaction of legal business.

2. Great care should be taken in framing a charter to secure the property to the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

See the form of Charter of the Reformed Presbyterian Congregation of Eighth Street, Pittsburgh, as published in their memorial volume of 1891.

3. Whether incorporated or not, the congregation as such should be organized.

Presbyterianism vests the spiritual control of a con-



gregation in the session, and commits the management of its financial affairs to an ordained Board of Deacons. These officers in the discharge of their duties, are subject to the courts of the Lord's House. Nevertheless they are the servants of the people, and it is eminently proper that they should statedly report to the congregation concerning the work entrusted to them. Besides, there are questions affecting the interests of the congregation which do not properly belong to any of the official boards, or, at least, on which the voice of the people should be heard.

4. The officers of the congregation should be president and secretary.

These are all the officers really necessary to the transaction of business; other officers may be made necessary by circumstances, or by the terms of the charter. For instance, a Board of Trustees may be required in order to hold the property.

5. The congregation should hold a regular annual meeting.

The business of this meeting should be:

- a. To hear a report by the session on the state of religion in the congregation.

This should be prepared with great care and with strict regard to the facts; with close appeal to the consciences of the people; dealing faithfully with their failings and short-comings, and making full recognition of their progress and attainments.

- b. A report from the Financial Board.

It is of the utmost importance that the people be kept in closest sympathy with the financial management. There can be no success in this line without the fullest confidence and heartiest coöperation. And this cannot be expected unless the congregation is taken confidentially into the plans of the financial board.

- c. Reports from all the congregational societies.

It is desirable that all the organizations of the congregation be permeated by a common church life. To this end there should be annual reports of the work of each: the Sabbath schools, the missionary societies, the young people's societies, should all be represented. The reports should be written and preserved, and thus the materials for a complete history of the activities of the congregation would be provided for future use.

d. Transaction of congregational business.

It has already been intimated that the congregation may have business peculiar to itself, which does not legitimately belong to any of the official boards; and any or all of the reports may originate business calling for the action of the congregation.

e. The cultivation of christian fellowship.

Dr. Wilcox suggests, "In announcing this meeting call special attention to it as one of the events in the round of the year. Let the roll of members be called. Let each one answer to his name with a text of the bible or a christian sentiment. Let a simple collation be served to promote familiar acquaintance among the members."

Gentlemen: I am persuaded that what is now a mere formality, if not a drag, can be made a means of arousing new interest in congregational life and work. Still, it has always been a problem in Church life, how to get the members to attend the congregational meetings. One of our ministers, supplying a vacant congregation, was asked to announce the annual meeting and urge the members to attend. After reading the notice, he proceeded in this wise: "When our Lord sent two of His disciples to bring the colt on which He rode into Jerusalem, He instructed them to say, 'The Lord hath need of him.' Now," said the minister, "if the Lord had need of an ass, He has need of you."

## LECTURE III

### GETTING THE PEOPLE AT WORK

It is one thing to set up a machine; it is another thing to set it going. I have already spoken of the official organization of a congregation: its Board of Elders, its Board of Deacons, and its corporate officers. You will soon discover among the people a strong disposition to leave the whole work of the Church in the hands of its officers. It requires judicious and persevering effort on the part of the pastor to counteract this tendency and enlist the united efforts of the people.

Nor should you become too much cast down that among the older members there are many drones, . . . some who consider it sufficient if they come to the crib regularly to feed. The reproach of their lives lies not with you. It is your duty to feed them, and you may congratulate yourself if you are always ready and able to do them this service.

But miss no chance of putting the ready hands to work.

There is a time in the life of every Christian when he is ready to be trained for work in the Master's vineyard. This time comes, usually, soon after conversion, immediately upon joining the church, or on the occasion of a certain definite spiritual experience. Be on the alert for these opportunities and concentrate your effort upon the training of such a member at the psychological moment. It is like breaking a colt: to be well done, it must be done at the right time.

The secret of success in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem is given in a single sentence, when it is

said: "For the people had a mind to work." (Neh. iv, 6.) How to secure this happy result is one of the most important and difficult problems in pastoral experience. What is the pastor's duty in this respect?

## I

### *The Pastor Must Persistently Teach the People as to Their Personal Responsibility.*

1. There is need for instruction on this point.

All admit that there is a great work before the Church, but few feel their personal responsibility for the doing of it. Men seek to lose themselves in the crowd as the woman did who came in the throng behind Jesus and touched the hem of His garment. The pastor must individualize them, as Jesus did when He turned about in the press and said: "Somebody hath touched me."

2. This teaching must be persistent.

Murphy says: "The pastor should endeavor to fix it upon every conscience, that none are so obscure that they may safely hide, and none so weak but there is something within their reach: that all are positively guilty who are not contributing their share to swell the vast volume of influence which is ultimately to sweep over the whole earth for its regeneration. This doctrine of every person having his own work to do should be laid down squarely, and never receded from, never omitted when there is an opportunity of pressing it home, from pulpit, or prayer-meeting, or pastoral visit."

3. This teaching should be enforced by the authority of Scripture.

Paul represents the Church as a body composed of many members, each having its own particular office and all of them essential to the perfection of the body.

"For the body," says he, "is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members, *every one of them*, in the body as it hath pleased him. . . . And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. . . . Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (1 Cor. xii, 14-27.)

With this graphic picture from the pen of an inspired Apostle before him, the pastor need not hesitate to enforce upon his people a sense of personal responsibility.

## II

*In Receiving Members into the Church the Pastor Should Emphasize the Fact that They are to be Workers.*

1. Because the impression made at such a time will have much to do in determining their future course.

Uniting with the Church is an epoch in the life of the young Christian. It is of much importance that he should have correct ideas of the duties involved in this new relationship. He should know that the Church is not a hospital, but a hive; that he is not entering a summer hotel, but a workshop; that he is not joining a pleasure excursion party, but that he is enlisting in an army and entering upon a campaign.

2. Because it is easy to be mistaken on this point.

So much is said of the blessedness to be received in joining the Church, that persons are sometimes led to think that it is all receiving and no giving. This is very agreeable to our natural dispositions. Dr. Wilcox remarks: "It is so pleasant to settle into a well-cushioned pew, hear fine music, and an eloquent sermon and then go home to a sumptuous dinner with the feeling that our Sunday duty is done. Teach emphatically," he adds, "that one is more profited by acting than by hearing, that it is more blessed to give than to receive."

3. Because this is according to the example of our Lord.

Jesus never deceived any one with the idea that the Christian life is one of indolence and ease. True, He does say: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." That there may be no mistake, however, He adds in the very next verse: "Take my yoke upon you." Now a yoke means service. (Matt. xi, 28-29.) We cannot misunderstand such passages as: Matt. xx, 1: "For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard." Matt xx, 6: "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" Matt. xxi, 28: "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard." Luke xix, 13: "Occupy till I come."

It is worthy of notice, that, in the parable of the talents, it is the man with the one talent that failed. This does not teach that a man with one talent is more likely to fail than a man with two or five; but to show that the one with the smallest gifts will be held accountable for the use of all that has been entrusted to him. When Jesus said: "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God," He did not have in view a modern sulky plow with the driver sitting at ease

with an umbrella over him, but rather one after the style of the cuts in the old almanac, under which the couplet ran thus:

"The man who by the plow would thrive,  
Himself must either hold or drive."

In reality, he must "both hold and drive," as you farm boys know. As pastors we must inculcate this view of the Christian life at the door of entrance to the Church. "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." (Titus iii, 8.)

### III

*The Pastor Should Study the Peculiar Gifts of the Individual Members of His Flock.*

1. Because gifts differ.

1 Cor. xii, 4. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." In the election of officers the choice must be left to the people, but in the distribution of workers a large share of responsibility rests with the pastor. It is neither wise nor right that missionary societies or young people's societies should assume to distribute the workers independently of the judgment of the pastor. That the pastor may act intelligently he must acquaint himself with the special gifts of each one.

2. Because it is of great importance to assign each one to the work for which he is adapted.

When the members of the human body are wrongly placed the result is a monstrosity. There are good many ecclesiastical monstrosities, as when the pew thinks itself a pulpit. To put into the eldership one whose gifts are adapted to the diaconate is like put-

ting a hand in the place of an eye. One may be very efficient in the place to which he is suited, and yet be either useless or harmful in another position.

In the Saviour's parable of the distribution of the talents He says: "To every man according to his *several ability*." The natural ability is the basis on which talents are distributed. To have given five talents to one who had ability for only two would have been to have wasted the talents and to have wronged the servant. It is no real honor to any man to be put into a higher position than he is capable of filling. It is a misfortune.

3. Because a mistake here is difficult to remedy.

You will never know, until you have tried it, how hard it is to get important work out of inefficient hands. Harm may result to the individual when the general good demands a change among the workers. He is a happy pastor who has the faculty to discern the fitness or unfitness of a person to a work before it is too late.

#### IV

#### *It is Necessary for the Pastor to Devise Plans of Work.*

With the field before him, and the peculiar personal gifts of his members in his mind, the next great responsibility of the pastor is to devise plans of work.

1. Because no efficient work can be done without a plan.

The Church is a building; the pastor is the master-builder. He must draw up the plans and specifications by which the workmen are to be guided. The Church is a vineyard; the pastor is the husbandman. He must determine the system of cultivation to be followed. The Church is an army; the pastor is the



commander-in-chief of all the forces. He must formulate the plan of campaign. If the pastor is a live earnest man, he will be planning all the time.

2. Because the need for new plans will constantly recur.
  - a. Methods wear out and lose their efficiency.
  - b. New fields of work open up.
  - c. New members come in and must be employed.
  - d. New zeal is kindled and must have an outlet.

These and other reasons will demand that new plans be devised to meet changing circumstances. It is an evidence of stagnation if not of decay when the pastor ceases to plan for work.

3. Because plans need to be carefully thought out before they are adopted.

When anything new is proposed, there are several important questions to be considered.

- a. Whether or not the method is Scriptural.

It is not enough that we have good intentions and good ends in view. We must have right methods. All our success depends on our being "laborers together with God." To labor with God we must work in God's way.

Dr. E. P. Marvin of Lockport, N. Y., is quoted in the September, 1905, number of the *Christian Statesman* as giving some pungent reasons why all effort fails to secure a revival of religion. Among other reasons he gives the following: "The less piety a Church has, the more oysters, ice-cream and fun it takes to run it, and the faster it runs from God. The craze of organization, added to outside lodges, splitting up, confusing and weakening the Church with many-lettered societies and Te-to-tum Clubs—all this unblest mechanism fills the Church with clatter of machinery and clamor of methods. These many superfluous wheels, unanointed by the Holy Spirit, are a dead weight, and they present little or no spiritual

output. God never organized His Church as the nexus for a confederacy of societies for miscellaneous purposes, but as a compact body for united effort, with the minimum of machinery and the maximum of power. When we seek to improve on this, we impugn the wisdom of God. We need to energize more, and organize less." He concludes with these words: "No great revival is possible till the Church and ministry repent, pray, get right with God, and unload the dead weight of about half our Church members."

Such an arraignment of the methods of Church work prevailing in our times emphasizes this point: that the very first question to be raised as to new methods proposed is, "Are they Scriptural?" No matter what apparent success they have, if they do not bear this test, they must be rejected.

- b. Whether or not it has been successfully employed elsewhere.

We must not allow ourselves to become so self-sufficient as to refuse to profit by the experience of others. We may get some valuable lessons as to plans of work from sister congregations or sister denominations. It would have been worth while for our Church to have given some attention to the plans and experiences of the United Presbyterians and the Methodists, and the Lutherans, and the Baptists, in determining our policy for the organization of our young people.

- c. Whether or not it is adapted to this congregation.

To find a method of work in successful operation in another pastorate does not insure its success in yours. You are a different man; you labor among a different people; you and they have a different environment. In considering plans a pastor should calmly reflect whether he has the right persons for carrying them out; whether he is himself willing to

undergo the labor necessary to their success. Bear in mind that a plan may look well in theory and yet be wholly impracticable. Reflection should come before inaugurating a plan, rather than regret afterwards.

4. The pastor should be persevering in his plans of work. When a plan is adopted, it should be pushed.

It is hurtful to the pastor's influence to be always inaugurating movements that are never carried out. People soon learn to distrust the plans of their minister if they are habitually failures. It not infrequently happens that a good plan of work is difficult to inaugurate. You must not be too easily discouraged. If you have been sufficiently careful in considering a plan, you should not too readily abandon it because it does not meet your expectations from the first. On the other hand do not obstinately persist in a plan to the injury of the cause, through unwillingness to confess your mistake.

5. Never plan without prayer.

You cannot succeed without God. It is presumption to plan without His counsel, and then expect to have His aid. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." The flock is His. The under shepherd should take counsel with the Chief Shepherd.

## V

### *The Pastor Should Train the Workers.*

Normal classes for the training of Sabbath school teachers and workers in missions may seem impossible, but the best of plans may be defeated in the hands of unskilled workmen. The pastor should be careful not to find fault with workers who are doing the best they

know, but do all in his power to instruct them as to improved methods. And there never was a successful pastor who did not conduct some sort of training class among his young people, in music, or in doctrine, or in methods of work, or in the Bible.

## VI

### *The Pastor Should Seek to Gather the Fruits of Their Labors.*

#### 1. He should expect fruits.

We should plan in faith and teach our people to labor in faith. It is true that God giveth the increase; but it is not less certain on that account that the husbandman plows and sows in hope. True, all our efforts will be in vain unless the Holy Spirit works with us. But we need not think of that as the most unlikely thing in the world. Nothing is more certain. "Much more shall the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask Him."

#### 2. He should be prompt to gather the fruits in their season.

We do too little reaping for the amount of sowing. We gather children into the Sabbath school, keep them perhaps for years, and then see them drift back into the world. We employ city missionaries, and the Church comes into contact with irreligious families and yet fails to win them. Good seed is sown, but no harvest is garnered. This ought not to be so. Young gentlemen, I beseech you to set yourselves to be reapers as well as sowers. Be alert for the ingathering of souls. God "giveth the increase," but bringing in the sheaves is our business. Nothing can be more discouraging to faithful workers in the Church, than to see their efforts fail of results through the failure, carelessness, or inefficiency of their pastor.

May these thoughts lead you to reflect that the pastoral office is a great trust; that it leaves no time to turn aside to secular employments; that it demands the fullest dedication of all our gifts of body, mind, and soul, and their utmost exercise; and that it affords the widest opportunities for usefulness, and promises the most glorious rewards for faithfulness. "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." (1 Pet. v, 1-4.)

## LECTURE IV

### THE PRAYER-MEETING

WE are now ready to turn our attention to the activities of the congregation, or The Pastor and People at Work. In placing the prayer-meeting first among the activities of church-life, I follow the example of most writers on Pastoral Theology.

Dr. Wilcox says: "Some writer has said to the young pastor: 'Give one-third of yourself to your pulpit, one-third to your pastoral calls, and one-third to the prayer-meeting.'" And he adds, "This estimate of the importance of the prayer-meeting is hardly exaggerate."

Dr. Cuyler in *How to be a Pastor*, says: "The prayer-meeting may fairly claim to be regarded as second only to the pulpit in the spiritual life of the Christian Church. Some would give it the first place, for, while many churches have managed to keep alive without a pastor, none are likely to preserve their vitality and vigor without a regular gathering of the flock for public devotion."

Murphy says: "The piety and usefulness of the Church are most intimately connected with its prayer-meetings. Whether as cause or effect, it is found that the degree of the one is always in proportion to the interest manifested in the other. It will therefore be seen at once that this is a subject that claims the most careful attention of the pastor. It is one which he must not only study, but carry out into practice from the first to the last day of his ministry. Everything demands of him that it should be made most prominent, in both thought and practice."

These are very strong testimonies. I think the writers describe the prayer-meeting, not as it is, but as it ought to be—the *ideal* prayer-meeting. Let it be your purpose to make the *ideal* prayer-meeting the *real* one in the congregation of which you are to be pastor, and then the best that has been said of the prayer-meeting will be true of yours. There is a fine field for progress in this department of our church life.

Let us consider:

## I

### *Wherein Lies the Importance of the Prayer-Meeting.*

1. It measures the spiritual life of the Church.

The prayer-meeting is the spiritual thermometer. The rise and fall of interest in the prayer-meeting marks the change of heat or coldness in the church. You may be at a loss to determine which is cause and which is effect; i. e., whether the cold prayer-meeting makes a cold church, or a cold church makes a cold prayer-meeting; but we know that a cold prayer-meeting indicates a cold church. They are inter-operative.

Not only is this true of the congregation as a whole, but equally true of the individual members. Those members who habitually attend the prayer-meeting will have warmth and fervor; while those who habitually absent themselves fall into spiritual decline. And even the same individual will grow hot or cold according as he attends or neglects the prayer-meeting.

Murphy says: "In a measure that can scarcely be mistaken, the attendance and interest in these meetings show whose hearts are alive to the things of

Christ, and what is the extent of spirituality that pervades the body."

What could more clearly demonstrate the importance of the prayer-meeting than this fact?

2. It *increases* the spiritual life of the Church.

The prayer-meeting is not merely a thermometer, to measure the heat of the spiritual body; nor yet a pulsimeter, for indicating the frequency, force, and variations of the spiritual pulse. It also supplies spiritual strength and increases the vital forces of the spiritual nature. It comes midway between the Sabbaths to arrest the rushing tide of worldliness, and to draw the Christian apart from the exacting cares of this earthly life; and it makes him "to sit in the heavenly places with Christ." "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint." (Isa. xl, 31.)

3. It *utilizes* the spiritual life of the Church.

a. The members are called to exercise their gifts in the prayer-meeting itself.

In the public worship on the Sabbath, the services are wholly in the hands of the pastor; in the prayer-meeting they should be as far as possible in the hands of the people. As the apostle says: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." (Heb. x, 25.)

b. The spiritual power generated in the prayer-meeting pervades all the other activities of the Church.

It has been well said that, "when the hearts of Christians are in it, and the life and unction of the Holy Spirit pervades it, it sends out its blessed influence to every part of the Church work." Through



it the Lord's Day services are made more profitable, the Sabbath school is blessed, the effort to attract to the sanctuary is prospered, the family is happier, and the fruits of the Spirit are everywhere seen.

It is not enough to say that the prayer-meeting creates the power, and the other agencies utilize it. The prayer-meeting is itself the connecting link between the Spirit's power and the human instrumentality. It is the band that unites the revolving shaft with the machine, and starts the click of cogs and the whir of wheels.

The importance of the prayer-meeting is seen in that it *measures* the spiritual life of the Church; still more, in that it *increases* it; and most of all that it *utilizes* it.

## II

### *How to Secure Attendance at the Prayer-Meeting.*

1. Arrange carefully as to the place of meeting.

a. If possible have all meet together.

It is always heartsome to have a good-sized meeting. It promotes a warmth, and sociability, and congregational spirit.

b. If necessary, district the congregation.

You must study the convenience of the people. They cannot be expected to come regularly from long distances. Even when the main body of the people meet at the church, it may be well to arrange cottage prayer-meetings in the outskirts,—both in city and in country congregations.

c. If there are several prayer-meetings, let them unite on special occasions.

For instance, this would be well once or twice during the week of prayer, and in the meetings preparatory to the communion.

2. Aim to have the place of meeting attractive:
  - a. Well-furnished.
  - b. Well-lighted.
  - c. Heated.
  - d. Ventilated.

Such provisions for the comfort of the worshippers are means of grace. People dislike to leave their comfortable homes and cushioned furniture and walk for miles to do penance sitting on a hard board, shivering with cold or stupefied and sickened with foul air.

Dr. Wilcox says: "Do your best to make it a cheerful, social room. Give it the air of a home-parlor. Have a carpet or drugget on the floor."

Especially, whatever else is lacking, let the room be amply lighted. A dingy place is enough to take the life out of any meeting that ever was gathered.

3. Reserve a time for the prayer-meeting, free from all other meetings.

It may be weekly, or semi-monthly, or monthly, according to circumstances: but let it have a stated time, and guard it from interference. This is of great importance in the cities. In and about Pittsburgh, it is well understood that Wednesday evening is prayer-meeting evening. Pastors should agree together that no meetings will be arranged which might draw away members from each other's prayer-meetings. Determinedly resist any interference with prayer-meeting night by any lecture course committee or by any proposed form of social entertainment. I sympathize far more than I once did with those pastors who refuse to dismiss the prayer-meeting for the sake of reform lectures or union services. These do not fill the place of the prayer-meeting, and, ordinarily, they should not ask to take its place. The modern device of arranging weddings for prayer-meeting evening is not from above. My advice is: Exalt the importance of

the prayer-meeting in the minds of your people by refusing to yield its place to any ordinary occurrence.

4. Give frequent and kindly invitation to attend the prayer-meeting.

Do not scold. It does no good. Invite and persuade. Let your invitations be marked by seriousness and solicitude. "Come early and get a back seat" is a modern pulpit witticism which is in very bad taste. It vitiates the appeal to the conscience by trifling with sacred things. It is not the speech of moral earnestness.

5. Refer occasionally in your discourses to the good things offered and enjoyed at prayer-meeting.

This doubles the appreciation of those who have enjoyed the good things; and it may awaken a sense of loss in the minds of the absentees. You need not always tell what the good things were. "The secret of the Lord is with the righteous."

6. Make the meetings interesting.

After all is said, this is the only way to have a good attendance. A few saintly souls will, from a sense of duty or by sheer force of habit, meet from week to week, and "go through" as they used to say in the good, old-time "Society"; but the ordinary modern Christian will not do that. The prayer-meeting cannot live on its good name. It must have worth.

On one occasion, in our Synod, a minister gave a very lengthy and pithless address on how to get the masses to attend church. When, at last, he gradually settled into his seat, another brother sprang up, and, in a quick, alert tone, said: "There are just three things to be done to bring the masses to church: (1) Invite them to come; (2) Welcome them when they do come; (3) Give them something for coming," and down he sat. It was as if some one had opened a

door and let in a blast. It is a good rule for securing attendance at prayer-meeting.

7. Encourage sociability at the close of the meeting.

A general handshaking, with especial attention to strangers, is a good thing. Yet a word of caution may be necessary just at this point. If a meeting has been peculiarly solemn and impressive, it is proper for the pastor to ask the people not to dissipate its good impressions by frivolous conversation, but to cherish them by speaking to each other of spiritual things.

### III

#### *General Rules for Conducting a Prayer-Meeting.*

1. Always prepare carefully.

When Dr. Wilcox quotes with approval the advice for a pastor to give one-third of his time to the prayer-meeting, he evidently has in view the method, common in many churches, of the pastor carrying on the meeting almost wholly himself and making an extended address. This is not common with us. Our danger is in "trusting to the spur of the moment" to carry us through. This is a great mistake.

2. The pastor should lead frequently.

Not always, because the prayer-meeting is the people's service; but frequently, because

- a. Something is due to his position as pastor;
- b. He is usually better qualified than others.

His mind is more taken up with spiritual things; he has more familiarity with methods; the people will follow his leadership more readily: "They know the Shepherd's voice; and a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers."

Customs differ. Dr. Cuyler gives it as his custom to entrust the charge of this service to the eldership

in turn. The custom, common in our church, of employing the male members in turn is better; and best of all, the custom which prevails in a few congregations of employing the women as well as the men. There is neither male nor female in the fellowship meeting.

3. Begin promptly.

It belongs to the pastor to see that the meeting opens on time. Never wait more than five minutes for the leader. Start the meeting and resign the chair to the appointed leader when he arrives. Nothing is surer to kill a prayer-meeting than dilly-dallying at the opening.

4. Seek to have many participate in the exercises.

The more that take part in a prayer-meeting, the better it is. Everyone who does anything thinks the meeting was good. Fault-finding usually comes from those who have contributed nothing. The children should be encouraged to read scripture references and to announce psalms.

5. Close promptly on time.

This is about as important as opening on time. Do not be betrayed into prolonging the meeting on account of a fresh interest that springs up just when it is time to close. It is not uncommon for persons who have left you to suffer the agony of long pauses all through the meeting, to have an impulse to speak when it is time to dismiss. Shut them off remorselessly. I do not think it is wicked even to have a little satisfaction in doing it. If there is a manifest interest at the close of the meeting which should be utilized, it may be better to hold an after meeting. But remember, it is no disadvantage for a prayer-meeting to close when everybody is wishing it would go on.

6. Aim to secure reverence and solemnity in the services.

People frequently engage in frivolous conversation while waiting for the meeting to begin. The leader rises and proceeds quite a distance in the reading of the psalm before quiet is secured. This is a very bad beginning.

Do not encourage facetious or funny remarks, or eccentricities of any kind. "Because He is thy Lord, do thou Him worship reverently."

## IV

### *The Exercises of the Prayer-Meeting.*

- i. As far as possible, let the exercises be voluntary.

In many places it is difficult to introduce voluntary exercises. It would be unwise to disturb the peace of a congregation, but, where it can be secured, the voluntary exercises are preferable.

- a. In a large meeting you cannot call every one by name.

The old method of one person going through all the parts of worship—singing, reading, and prayer—was adapted only to the small societies.

- b. A voluntary meeting gives greater freedom to the operations of the Holy Spirit.

A devotional meeting should be led by the Spirit. When the leader calls on individuals, he is liable to summon one to speak whom the Spirit is prompting to pray; or ask one to pray who is prepared to speak; or wholly to overlook one to whom the Spirit has given a message or a prayer, and call on one who has no tidings ready. "Let the Holy Spirit have His way with you," is a good motto for a prayer-meeting.

- c. Meetings of this kind will rise to greater spiritual heights than by the other method.

This is a matter of common experience, and is according to the operation of spiritual laws. The free, spontaneous movement carries with it a spiritual impulse which is contagious and cumulative.

d. The success of the voluntary meeting depends largely upon the leader.

It is a great mistake to suppose that because the meeting is voluntary the leader of the meeting is relieved from responsibility. It requires no great tact to call out members by name, but it often taxes the utmost resources of the leader to keep the meeting going without naming persons. "Will some one pray?" "Has any one a psalm?" "Will not some of the young people speak?" "Can not some one relate an experience?" These are some of the ways of giving the meeting a lift.

e. In a voluntary meeting the pastor must earnestly sustain the leader.

The pastor has not done his whole duty when he has taken his place in speaking or prayer. He should prompt others to the service. This may often be done privately before the meeting opens,—especially when the leader is young or inexperienced. The famine should be anticipated and provision laid up beforehand, like the corn in the storehouses of Egypt. This becomes a necessity in introducing the voluntary method where the other has been the custom.

2. Give much attention to the praise service,

You need not have a dull prayer-meeting if you have good singers and know how to use the psalter. There are psalms suited to every scriptural subject. My own opinion is that the introduction of the revised psalter will be a great aid to the prayer-meeting. But do not disturb the peace of the congregation. There have been some foolish things done in the effort to introduce new versions. Do not despair if the people are found unwilling to accept the re-

vision; there are great possibilities in the old version yet.

In a few instances, our people have introduced the "Bible Songs" in prayer-meetings and mission services and in young people's societies. Such a course is irregular, lawless, and hurtful. The Bible Songs are without warrant in our Church. They are admittedly far removed from the original words of the Holy Spirit. The most conservative ministers and people of the United Presbyterian Church do not approve of them. In reply to a question whether they could be lawfully introduced into our prayer-meetings, leading members of Synod answered most emphatically that they could not; and it was accepted without dissent as the mind of the court.<sup>1</sup>

No one believes that he could secure approval of the supreme judicatory. To introduce them without warrant is a violation of our ordination vows, in which we promise subordination to the authority of the Synod. I charge you, as candidates for the ministry, never to be guilty of willfully violating the laws and established usages of the Church to which you belong.

3. Encourage the reading of Scripture references.

Persons will do this who will not participate in any other way. Frequently it is the very best part of the study of a passage. The custom of rising to read is helpful in many ways.

4. Aim to have many prayers.

The fault with many of our prayer-meetings is that

<sup>1</sup> The attention of Synod having been called to the fact that in some congregations the Bible Songs are used in Sabbath Schools and mission work, the following action was taken: "That the Pastors and Sessions of such congregations as may be using unauthorized versions of the psalms in the worship in any department of their church work, be earnestly urged to discontinue the practice and conform to the law of the church on the subject." (*Minutes of Synod, 1907, p. 77.*)



there is too little praying. The truth is, it is often a misnomer to call it a prayer-meeting. It is Hamlet with Hamlet left out. We might better omit the remarks.

The number of prayers may be increased:

- a. By having a series of prayers;
  - b. By having special prayers for special objects;
  - c. Requests for prayers should always be welcomed, and may sometimes be asked for.
5. A Bible reading may be substituted occasionally for remarks on the passage.

Our prayer-meetings are too formal. We get into ruts. The same people do the same things at every meeting, and the others do nothing. A well chosen Bible Reading will serve to break up this monotony, and in the hands of a skillful leader it can be made both interesting and profitable.

6. Aim to have the remarks practical, experimental, and devotional, rather than doctrinal or controversial.

It is generally said that our people speak with more freedom on doctrinal subjects than on practical ones; and that they are better at controversy than at testifying to religious experience. We should aim to cultivate their neglected gifts. How this may be done will be treated in the next lecture.

## LECTURE

### THE PRAYER-MEETING—HELPS AND HINDRANCES

It may seem to you that about all has been said that needs to be said, as to the relation of the pastor to the prayer-meeting. The fact, however, remains that our prayer-meetings are generally far below the ideal presented and that something should be done to increase their efficiency as a means of grace. This lecture will be devoted to a consideration of Helps and Hindrances to a Successful Prayer-meeting.

#### I

#### *Helps to a Good Prayer-Meeting.*

##### 1. The selection of suitable subjects:

The prayer-meeting, to be successful, should have a center of unity. Around that center, all its exercises should be made to revolve. The prayers, the praise, and the remarks should radiate from that center in the beginning and should converge to that center at the close. And the center of unity in any good prayer-meeting is the scripture passage which furnishes the subject for consideration. It follows without argument that the selection of suitable subjects is essential to success.

What should be the character of the subjects?

A. The subject should be definite and particular. In the old-time society the rule was for the one who gave the text to "put a Statement on it." This meant to raise some point from the verse, which would give

direction to the discussion. The custom was a good one. Dr. Wilcox says: "There is sometimes a notion that if the subject is a large comprehensive one, it will promote variety in remark and prove rich in suggestion. This is a great mistake. . . . What you need is to divide your subject into several varied ones, that one meeting in a series will not resemble the others." He advises, in announcing the subject, to sub-divide it, to make points. In most of our congregations there are those who can make points about as well as the minister; and they prefer to speak on points they make themselves. What they need is a clearly defined topic. Instead of selecting as a subject, "The Means of Grace," take "The Bible as a Means of Grace," or "Prayer as a Means of Grace," or "The Sacraments as a Means of Grace."

B. The subjects should be practical rather than doctrinal.

This does not mean that there shall not be doctrine, but that the aim will be not so much the statement and proof of doctrines as inquiry after the practical uses. For instance, instead of discussing "The Kingship of Christ," consider "The Duties Growing Out of Our Relation to Christ as King."

Two reasons may be given:

a. Doctrinal subjects tend to long and dry speeches. These are always hurtful and sometimes fatal to the meeting.

b. Practical subjects invite personal testimony.

The prayer-meeting should be an experience meeting. The Methodists go to one extreme; we go to the other. They are in danger of professing experiences which they do not have; we are in danger of concealing experiences which we ought to profess. The scriptural ground is safe and right; i. e., "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell what He hath done for my soul." (Ps. lxvi, 16.)

C. The Distinctive Principles of the Church should have a place.

If a denomination has any just ground for maintaining a separate existence, its distinctive principles must be held as of sufficient importance to color all the departments of church life. Various advantages arise from occasionally introducing them in prayer-meeting.

- a. It helps the pastor to understand what is needed:

If the people are indifferent, or ignorant, or unsettled on any point, it is likely to discover itself in the freedom of the prayer-meeting. Then the remedy can be judiciously applied.

- b. The discussion may be more instructive to the young than would be a sermon on the subject.

It gives an opportunity to ask questions and to state difficulties. Our distinctive principles can be simplified to suit the minds of children. I recall an instance from a prayer-meeting address by Rev. R. C. Allen, just before a communion. He said he would explain to the children why Covenanters do not vote, and proceeded as follows:

- (1) Jesus Christ is the King of Nations;
- (2) Nations ought to own their King;
- (3) Our Nation does not own King Jesus;
- (4) This is a great dishonor done to Christ;
- (5) A Christian should not join in this dishonor;
- (6) Those who vote consent to the Nation's dishonoring Christ.

Mr. Allen seemed to gain assent to every point as he advanced. His remarks were instructive, full of warning, and made a lasting impression.

- c. It may lead to an invitation to preach on these subjects:

I recall three such invitations that came to me by vote of the prayer-meeting—one on Systematic Giving; another on Secret Societies; the third, on the Exclusive Use of the Psalms.

The Report on Young People's Societies at the Synod of 1905 prescribed a series of topics taken from the Covenant of 1871. Nothing could be more helpful to Covenanter youth.

2. A judicious method of selecting subjects:

Since the success of the prayer-meeting depends so largely on the suitableness of the subject, the matter of choosing the topic becomes of the first importance. No one method is best for all places, nor for any one place at all times. The following suggestions may assist in choosing the best method for *your* congregation:

A. Some one may be appointed at each meeting to bring the subject for the next meeting.

The *advantages* of this method are:

a. It interests a large number of members.

The one who selects the subject and his friends will be interested. "I must attend the prayer-meeting to-night because they have my subject." "Come and hear my subject discussed." "I want you to speak to-night on my text." "I hope we shall have a good meeting, for I chose the text." A method which leads to looking forward with expectation has much to commend it.

b. It secures subjects in which the people are interested.

The prayer-meeting is the people's meeting. This is a good reason why they should choose the subjects directly.

c. It gives opportunity to adapt the subject to the circumstances.

"He hath made everything beautiful in its time." Timeliness in a subject helps the prayer-meeting.

The *objections* to this method are:

- a. The appointment is liable to be overlooked occasionally.
- b. The absent members may not learn the subject for next meeting.

It is not uncommon to hear the remark: "I was not at the last meeting and did not hear the subject until I came in." This is not infrequently the ominous preface to a long, rambling talk which confirms the truth of the statement.

- c. The selection is not always judicious.

This is more likely to be the case than when the selection is made by an experienced committee.

- d. Some subjects will be chosen over and over again, and others not at all.

B. A second method is to have a committee select subjects and leaders for six months or a year in advance.

The *advantages* of this method are:

- a. It gives timely notice of the subject to all;
- b. Tends to equalize the privileges and duties of the members;
- c. Secures a wider and more systematic range of subjects;
- d. Avoids the introduction of unsuitable topics.

Its *disadvantages* are:

- a. It removes the meeting further from the people;
- b. Has less adaptability to changing circumstances.

C. A third method is to adopt the topics selected by a Presbyterial or Synodical committee.

The *advantages* of this method are:

- a. It saves labor;
- b. Gives a uniform subject to a number of congregations;

- c. Secures aids similar to the Sabbath School helps.

Its *disadvantages* are the same as in the second method.

D. A fourth method is to use the Golden Texts of the Sabbath School lessons.

The *advantages* of this method are:

- a. Every one knows the subject;
- b. There is access to Sabbath School helps;
- c. People are already interested in the subject;
- d. It offers an aid to Sabbath School workers.

Its *disadvantages* are:

- a. It tends to give undue attention to one subject;
- b. Some of the most appropriate subjects are omitted;
- c. The aim of the Sabbath School is instruction, that of the prayer-meeting is devotion;
- d. It has a tendency to take the freshness off Sabbath School teaching.

The above are the four principal methods known to me as prevailing in our congregations. The conscientious pastor will diligently seek to discover the method best suited to his field. I have given them thus at length and in detail because of the great importance that attaches, not only to the prayer-meeting topics, but to the method of their selection. If your prayer-meeting lacks variety and freshness, introduce a new method of selecting the topics. Make a trial of it for three months. You will be surprised how many will take part who have never taken part before; and you will be gratified to find the old standbys shaken out of their rut.

## II

*Hindrances to the Prayer-Meeting.*

After what has been said of the importance of the prayer-meeting, we must all feel that for some reason there are very few ideal prayer-meetings. There are obstacles in the way of success that sorely try the earnest pastor. If what I have to say does not point out a way of escape from these difficulties, it may at least assist you to bear them. I can say in the words of Peter: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you."

What are some of the Hindrances, and how shall we overcome them?

- I. The prayer-meeting suffers from the disposition of people to choose the back seats.

It would not seem strange that those who occupy the front row at the theatre should form the back row at the prayer-meeting; but it is remarkable that prominent church members will seek the remotest corners of the room. It is a very serious obstacle in the way of a good prayer-meeting.

Dr. Washington Gladden says: "A pastor with people in the back seats and emptiness between himself and them, feels like singing pathetically:

"Though sundered far, by faith we meet  
About a common mercy seat."

This is not such an insignificant matter as it seems. Murphy says: "When the people are scattered over the house, back by the door or around the walls, there is a feeling of coldness comes over the whole assembly. . . . The sensation of indifference is inevitably produced. If strangers happen to be present, an exceedingly unhappy impression is made upon them.



The minister or other leader is chilled by seeing nothing around him but empty seats."

Admitting the evil, what is the remedy?

A. Some turn down or pile away all but a few front chairs and let them be brought out as the people gather.

My observation is that it would be necessary to put them under lock and key or they would be carried out before the seats were half filled.

B. Habitually call on the brethren in the rear seats.

Our Synod has a rule of procedure that when two members rise and address the moderator at the same time, the floor shall be awarded to the member most distant from the moderator's chair. If it were made a rule of procedure to call on the members in the rear seats first, modesty would prompt some of them to move forward.

C. By quiet, personal persuasion, seek to break up the habit.

I doubt the propriety of publicly alluding to the fact at all, or showing any annoyance about it. To scold and harangue the back seats is worse than useless. But if you set yourself determinedly to break up the habit by tactful personal effort, in most places you will succeed.

2. A second serious hindrance is from a few persons monopolizing the time.

Speaking of this, Dr. Cuyler says: "Some good people mar a meeting without intending it. For example, one fluent brother gets to monopolizing the time by the inordinate frequency, or the inordinate length of his utterances. I once had an excellent church member who spoke regularly at every prayer service, and it requires a very full man to do that profitably. I frankly told him that he was crowding others out of their rights, and suggested that he might

better address the Almighty in petition sometimes, instead of always addressing his neighbors in exhortation. He accepted it kindly."

Some good speakers would be listened to more eagerly if they relieved their talks by more frequent flashes of silence.

A. Stir up the silent members to do their part.

My observation is that this foregoing evil is frequently the fault of those who refuse to do anything. There are persons who find fault with others for monopolizing the time who would, themselves, sit there and let the meeting die and then watch in silence beside the corpse, rather than contribute anything to keep it alive.

B. Secure the promise of some privately that they will occupy the time.

This need not be done with the avowed purpose of crowding somebody else out, but with that result.

C. If necessary, speak to such persons of their fault.

They usually know it themselves. In fact it is quite common to hear such a person aggravate his offense by repeated apologies and by unconvincing assurances that he will not take any time. In dealing with such a case, general remarks seldom effect a change. And yet I must caution you to use the utmost delicacy and care not to wound unnecessarily one who, from a sense of duty, is seeking to do his part in the prayer-meeting. It is well to have the art of the woman of Tekoah and "fetch about this form of speech."

3. The prayer-meeting often suffers from long common-place speeches and prayers.

This evil is related to the foregoing. I need not discuss it. You have all seen it. It is almost everywhere. What is the remedy?

A. Make a rule for brevity.

With common consent to a three-minute rule, you need not make it an issue with the man personally.

B. Place a clock where all can see it.

The difficulty is that everybody sees it except the offender, and he drags on in blissful ignorance.

C. Secure a rapid movement in the meeting by having all the exercises short.

If the leader takes the chair two or three minutes late, then mopes over the psalm book two or three minutes more, then with deliberation draws one leg off the other knee and makes two or three ineffectual efforts to get to his feet, then reads a lengthy portion of psalm and the longest chapter in the book, and prays from the Creation down through all creation, he has delivered the prayer-meeting over, shaven and shorn, to the hand of the Philistines.

Reading several short selections bearing directly on the subject, rather than long chapters; singing frequently, but briefly; offering a short, pointed prayer—all this by the leader in opening the meeting will help. Like begets like.

D. The pastor should set a good example.

E. As a last resort it may be necessary to speak plainly to the offender.

4. A fourth hindrance to the prayer-meeting comes from grumblers and fault-finders.

Dr. Cuyler says: "It commonly requires the presence of several sensible people to make a good prayer-meeting, but it is in the power of one or two weak-minded and troublesome people to mar it most wretchedly. Some people of this sort will come into a meeting as moths fly into a candle; they stick there like the moths, but instead of being scorched to death, they merely extinguish the meeting."

There are some people so constituted that they never see the bright side of anything. It is a very unhappy temperament, and speeches made habitually

in this vein, even when discussing the evils of the day, may do much to injure the prayer-meeting. Then such people are sure to complain of the meetings. They will even scold about the absentees until they make those who are present wish they were absent, to escape the tirade.

The pastor must be on the alert not to allow such persons to impart to the prayer-meeting the outlook of their jaundiced eyes. The prayer-meeting is no place for talking the church down. Habitual grumblers should be suppressed or they will suppress the prayer-meeting. Kindle such a light as will dispel the darkness and drive away the moles and bats and owls. The prayer-meeting is not the place for political pessimism, but for spiritual uplift. Make it your rule to send the people home with the impression that they have had a good meeting.

5. It is a serious hindrance when men of inconsistent lives take a prominent part in the prayer-meeting.

Cuyler says: "There may be cases in which a meeting is seriously disturbed by the unwelcome utterances of persons whose characters are more than doubtful and who desire to gain a cheap reputation for piety by taking part in prayer or exhortations. Such transgressors should be frankly told that they had better remain silent until they are ready to open their lips in honest confession."

This last remark is noteworthy. If a man who has gone wrong has the humility fully to confess his fault and to seek the forgiveness and the prayers of his brethren, he may fill a prayer-room with a fragrance as sweet as that of the broken alabaster box. But there is a species of wordy and windy parading of one's own awful guiltiness which only nauseates the auditors, and cannot impose upon God.

My own experience is that there is no class of of-

fenders that is more obnoxious than those who have gone wrong financially. People are not willing to be exhorted, or even led in prayer, by one who has cheated them. Moody says: "A man who pays fifty cents on the dollar when he could pay a hundred cents had better keep still." This is good advice, even if he couldn't pay his debts, provided the general impression is that he could, or if his inability arises from simple neglect or carelessness.

6. The last hindrance of which I will speak is the long pauses between the exercises.

What can be done to correct this evil?

- A. Impress the elders with their responsibility;
- B. Engage persons privately to break up such pauses;
- C. Encourage voluntary psalm-singing without reading;
- D. Urge the leader of the singing to be prompt with the music;
- E. Turn the pauses into seasons of silent prayer.

This is the most important. The silences are the best part of some meetings. It should be impressed upon all that when silences occur, they are not to be considered as breaks in devotion, but that all hearts are lifted up in unison to God. An appropriate petition at such times would be:

"My closed lips, O Lord, by Thee  
Let them be opened:  
Then shall thy praises by my mouth  
Abroad be published."

In closing these lectures on the prayer-meeting, I would again urge upon you that you resolve that as pastors you will give great care and attention to the improvement of the prayer-meeting service, and that you will carefully look after those who willfully and habitually neglect it.

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto

love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." (Heb. x, 24, 25.)

## LECTURE VI

### THE RELATION OF THE SABBATH SCHOOL TO THE CHURCH

It is too late in the day to stop to discuss the importance of the Sabbath School. The fact that many millions throughout all Christendom are engaged in its exercises; that the best talent of the churches is employed in the preparation of its literature; that it receives large attention from the Church courts; and that the deepest interest is felt in the discussions of its methods and plans of work in Sabbath School Institutes, Conventions, and Assemblies; all these testify to the important place which the Sabbath School has attained among the activities of our Church life.

The following testimonies of eminent pastors, as quoted by Murphy, will impress the claims of the Sabbath School upon your time and attention, as pastors. Rev. Dr. Ashbel Green, near the close of his life said: "If I had my ministry to go over again, I would give more attention to the children." Rev. Dr. Samuel Miller gave this emphatic testimony: "After the observation and experience of a long life I have come decisively to the conclusion that, if I had my life to live over again, I would pay ten times as much attention to the children and young people of my charge as I ever did. If I were now about to take a new or feeble church, I would consider that to give attention to the children and young people of the neighborhood would be one of the most certain methods of collecting a large congregation that could be

employed." Rev. Dr. S. H. Tyng says: "If every pastor would give one sermon on every Sunday especially addressed to the young, and designed and prepared to teach them, he would find himself enlarging his direct usefulness in this particular work, and equally advancing the value and benefit of every other class of his public and private labors in religious instruction." Such testimonies as these from aged pastors, reviewing their life work from the threshold of eternity, should have much weight with those just entering the ministry. Of Him who is our example and our Lord it is said: "He shall feed His flock like a Shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom." (Isa. xl, 11.)

Our theme to-day is The Relation of the Sabbath School to the Church.

## I

*The Sabbath School is IDENTICAL with the Church.*

The Sabbath School is the Church at work. To conceive of it as a separate, independent, and rival institution set up alongside the Church is an error of other days. If this were the true idea of the Sabbath School, then the charge that it is without Scriptural warrant would be well-founded. The authority for the Sabbath School is in the command given to the elders of the Church: "Shepherdize the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." (Acts xx, 28.) The Sabbath School is simply the Church of Christ, exercising the authority with which He has invested her, and employing the talents with which He has endowed her, to do the work with which He has entrusted her. The relation between the Sabbath School and the Church is one of *identity*.



## II

*The Sabbath School Should be Subordinate to Church Authority.*

This follows from the relation of identity. On this subject Bishop John H. Vincent in his work entitled *The Modern Sunday School*, says: "The question as to the original authority of the Sunday School will be answered according to the theory of the person questioned. It may be in the school itself as an independent organization, a society outside of all Churches and amenable to none. It may be, and I think *in every case should be*, from the Church as a divine institution established to do a given work and creating the Sunday School as the wisest and best method for doing that work. Having established or recognized the method, the Church as a local body, or the Church Synodical, should be responsible for everything pertaining to the school, for the constitution or plan under which it is to be conducted, and for the officers who are to have control for this purpose. These should make regular reports to the Church in her governing conference or committee, or to the congregation in which all ecclesiastical power is lodged. Authority must dwell somewhere, and where more appropriately or securely than in the Church itself?" With the principles here laid down by Bishop Vincent, I agree in the main.

- I. The Sabbath School of the congregation should be under the immediate control of the session.
  - a. In the choice of its officers.
  - b. In the selection of its teachers.
  - c. In the methods of its work.
  - d. In the nature and scope of its instructions.

The reason of all this is obvious. The Church is responsible for the religious instruction and training of her youth, and of all her members; and she cannot

shift that responsibility to other shoulders. How this control should be exercised will be discussed later. Suffice it here to say that the authority of the session over the school should be unquestioned.

2. The mission schools of a congregation should be under the control of the session.

Every Sabbath School is a missionary agent. In every neighborhood where there is a Christless home there will be mission scholars. To reach these is one of the great ends of the Sabbath School. But in all large towns, and in cities, there should be established, in outlying districts, what are distinctively called *Mission Schools*. These are frequently organized and carried on under the leadership of some earnest man or woman, wholly independent of Church control. Such schools would gain immensely by being placed under the supervision of a devoted pastor and a judicious session. The gospel gains power over the hearts and lives of men by being connected with the divine institutions of the Church. When such a field lies open the authorities of the Church should occupy it and extend their supervision over it.

3. Even a union school would be better under the control of some one Church.

I would prefer to labor in a union school controlled by any body of evangelical Christians that would agree to maintain Scriptural forms of worship, rather than in a so-called union school organized independently of all churches.

### III

*The Sabbath School Should be in VITAL Union with the Church.*

A graft may be inserted into a living tree and be held in its place by bands and wax, but until it forms

a vital connection with the tree it will neither grow nor bear fruit. So a Sabbath School may be held in an external connection with the Church by the bands and cords of Church authority, but, before it can flourish and become fruitful, it must have such vital union with the Church that the spiritual forces of the Church's life will flow out through every branch, and twig, and leaf, and flower, and fruit of its organism.

How shall this result be secured?

1. The members of session should manifest a deep interest in the school.

Not that every elder should be a teacher. Many an elder has no gift in that direction. Such would prove their interest in the welfare of the school by not teaching. But each one should manifest interest by his presence, by intimacy with the scholars and teachers; by words of approval and encouragement; by his kindly helpful suggestions for improvement; and by his prayers.

2. All the members of the Church should be in the school.

The lawful exceptions to this rule are not sufficient to modify the statement. Those who excuse themselves from attendance on the ground that they are unfit to be teachers bear witness to their need to be taught. No one is too old to study the Bible or too wise to receive instruction.

In some country congregations they have what has been aptly named "the horse-shed class." It is usually composed of men who seem to think they know too much to spend their time in the simple exercises of the Sabbath School; and so they sit on the fence and chew tobacco and talk worldliness, while those of lower attainments pore over their Bibles, or engage in services of worship. The pastor needs great wisdom and tact in approaching this misguided class, but he should not rest satisfied until it is broken up.

I was present in a Sabbath School Convention where the question was asked, "How shall we keep the children in the Sabbath School, as they grow up?" The answer was given. "Build a wall of grown folks between them and the door." The difficulty with many schools is that there is a wall of grown folks built outside the door and it keeps them out, instead of keeping them in.

3. All the children of the Sabbath School should attend the Church services.

Bishop Vincent deals earnestly with this question. He says: "In this connection, I make earnest protest against making the Sunday School a substitute for public service of worship and preaching, especially in the case of little children. The service is for them and they should be required to attend it regularly."

I am familiar with the usual objections, viz:

- a. "The child cannot understand the sermon."

The answer to this is:

- (1) Adults do not all understand the sermon.
- (2) Children understand more than we suppose.
- (3) Sermons of more simplicity and plainness would be an advantage to both children and adults.

- b. "Children are disinclined to go."

The answer to this is:

- (1) It is not a matter of the children's choice, but of parental authority. The children should not remember the day when they did not attend preaching.
- (2) Their disinclination cannot set aside the claims of God.
- (3) They are not excused from week-day schools because they are disinclined to attend.

c. "We may prejudice our children against church by requiring them to attend." To this we answer:

- (1) The habit of church going will overcome the prejudice.
- (2) The habit of non-church going is more dangerous than the prejudice caused by parental discipline.
- (3) Experience proves the contrary.

The men and women of our day who are most faithful in attendance upon the sanctuary are those who were trained to it as children. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and, when he is old, he will not depart from it."

4. The services of worship in the Sabbath School should harmonize with the Church service.

It is a mistake to introduce forms of worship into the Sabbath School which are not employed in the Church. As I have already said in another connection, the introduction of the United Presbyterian "Bible Songs" into our Sabbath Schools is wholly unwarranted and to be condemned. Our own new version should be brought into all the services: Sabbath school, young people's societies, prayer meetings, and church services.

5. The children should be made acquainted with the Church and her glorious work.

Murphy says: "The children should be made to see the superior advantages which the Church has above every mere institution of men. They should be taught her honorable history, and they should be kept well acquainted with the various projects she is carrying on for the purpose of saving and sanctifying the human race. The more they are made to know of the Church, the more they will be interested in her and be drawn to the fold. They should be made to feel that the Church is theirs and awakened to a lov-

ing concern in all her affairs. They should also be taught that they have duties toward the Church, to help forward her interests, to love her, and to strive to bring others to love her."

A little reflection upon these words, and upon the impression generally made by Sabbath-school teaching, will convince us that the Sabbath School is not held close enough to the heart and life of the Church.

6. We should cultivate in the Sabbath School a sincere and intelligent denominational attachment.

Murphy says: "If patriotism loves its own Country, should not piety love its own Church? Our own denomination, whatever it is, we think to be the best, as we show by our connection with it. Should we not teach our children that we do so, sincerely, believe? To stay them in the midst of wildly floating theories, to fix them in the possession of the blessings of the house of God, it is deeply important that all our children should be taught to love their own Church."

In this matter great stress is to be laid on the phrase, "An intelligent attachment." Attachment to a denomination is comparatively valueless unless it springs from love for the distinctive truth held by that denomination, intelligently apprehended.

"Intelligent attachment" includes three things:

- a. To know the truth.
- b. To love the truth.
- c. To live the truth.

There cannot be intelligent attachment to any truth which we do not know; nor attachment of any kind to truth which we do not love; nor abiding attachment to any truth which we do not embody practically in our lives. There will be vital union between the Sabbath School and the Church when both are united to the living truth of the living God.

7. It should have a place in the services of the sanctuary.

a. In the prayers.

Officers, teachers and scholars should feel the heart-throbs of the Church in her prayers in their behalf.

b. By special sermons.

(1) On the Sabbath School.

(2) To the Sabbath School.

My own custom in the later years of my pastorate was to preach to the Sabbath School the first Sabbath of each quarter and to especially invite the children of the different mission schools to these services. On such occasions I have spoken to over two hundred children, largely mission scholars. I look back upon those services as among the most delightful of my pastorate. I do not know that I helped the children greatly, but I do know how much they helped me.

#### IV

*The Sabbath School should be Supported by the Church.*

It is remarkable how difficult it frequently is to secure a generous support of the Sabbath School by the congregation. Congregations which pour out their money freely for other causes will allow their own Sabbath School to suffer for financial aid. Dr. Wilcox says: "The pecuniary support of the school must go with the control of it. A man who sends off his son to earn his own living can hardly expect from him an implicit obedience. Many a scholar that belongs to a church to-day that liberally pays its pastor, choir, and sexton, might well cry: 'How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!'" Of course,

collections will be taken up in the Sabbath School, but these should not be expended on the school itself, but used to develop in the children the grace of giving for the benefit of others.

The expenses of the Sabbath School should always be included in the financial scheme for the year, and should be calculated on a generous scale. "There is that giveth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty."



## LECTURE VII

### THE RELATION OF THE PASTOR TO THE SABBATH SCHOOL

HAVING considered the relation of the Sabbath School to the Church, it follows naturally to inquire what is the relation of the pastor to the Sabbath School? On this subject views differ. Some very eminent preachers take the ground that the Sabbath School has no claim upon their time, that their business is to preach the gospel. Others magnify the claims of the Sabbath School, even above the claims of the pulpit and neglect the preparation of sermons to attend to the details of Sabbath-school work. Another large class admit its claims, theoretically, and almost entirely overlook them practically. Let us, therefore, study the question in the spirit of honest inquiry, and seek to reach settled convictions as to what place the Sabbath School shall have in the distribution of our time as pastors.

#### I

*Usually, the Pastor should not be the Superintendent of the Sabbath School.*

- I. Because it draws too heavily on his nervous force.

The supervision and control of the Sabbath School require effort. The superintendent must be alert and active, not merely during the opening and closing exercises, but during the session of the school. It is very important that the minister should come to his pulpit work with all the freshness and vigor of which he is naturally possessed.

2. This work can be well done by others.

If it were true that no person but the pastor could do the work well, it might be his duty to undertake it, even at the expense of pulpit power. But experience shows that many of the most successful superintendents are laymen. There are duties which the pastor himself must perform. As far as possible let him reserve himself for these, and develop the gifts of his people in the other services.

3. It trains the congregation to depend too much on the pastor.

It is a misfortune for a congregation to be dependent upon any man. It is no kindness to the people for the pastor to carry the burdens that belong to them; for when he has killed himself doing it, they have become too weak to carry them themselves. It is no small compliment to our Covenanter people to say, that, while none honor their pastors more than they, few depend on them less. If the pastor is absent for a Sabbath, or from a prayer-meeting, the work still goes on. Where you find a congregation that gives up its services when the pastor is away, you have found one that is getting ready to die. This independence is promoted by keeping the prayer-meeting and the Sabbath School largely in the hands of the people. When a prominent pastor went out of our denomination, leaving the New Castle congregation without a shepherd, that congregation paid a high compliment to his training by marching straight forward without losing a step.

## II

*Circumstances May Arise in which It is the Duty of the Pastor to be the Superintendent.*

1. When only one preaching service is required, the pastor should aim to have two services: if

not in the congregation, then at some outpost. In case this fails, he may take charge of the school.

2. In a new field where no one qualified is available.

In founding a new congregation it is of great importance that the Sabbath School be started right and carried to the highest point of efficiency. It not infrequently happens, that, in the fewness of numbers, no one can be found of sufficient knowledge, tact, and experience to be safely entrusted with the charge of the school. In such circumstances the earnest pastor will, for a time, over-burden himself, rather than let the work fall into inefficient hands.

3. Where the Sabbath School has fallen into ruts and no one else can lift it out.

It sometimes happens that an old man has been superintendent for years and has outlived his usefulness. He is occupying the place to the manifest injury of the school, and yet it seems impossible to drop him out. Perhaps he would willingly give way to the pastor, but would be deeply wounded if any other were put in his place. In such circumstances it might become the duty of the pastor to accept the place until such time as he could transfer it to other hands.

These and other exceptional cases may suspend the rule, but they do not set it aside permanently.

### III

*Usually, the Pastor should not be a Teacher in the School.*

1. For the same reasons that he should not be the superintendent.

Others can do the work of teaching; it will be the

means of growth and development to them to do it; and the minister's strength should be reserved for other services.

2. Because the pastor's class is likely to overshadow the other classes.

Naturally the pastor should be able to make his class superior to the others. The tendency, therefore, is to make excuses to get into the pastor's class. Other teachers feel uncomfortable, not so much because they cannot rival the pastor, as because they feel that their scholars would prefer to be in his class.

3. Because the pastor's teaching should be done at a point where it will reach the whole school.

In relieving the pastor from obligation to be either the superintendent of the school or the teacher of a class, there is no intention of depriving the school of his services. He should be more than a teacher, i. e., a teacher of the teachers, in Normal Class and in Teachers' Meeting.

#### IV

*The Pastor should be the Pastor of the Sabbath School.*

1. He should exercise his pastoral office in the school itself.
  - a. He should visit the school regularly. His coming into the school should be like the rising of the sun, bringing both light and warmth.
  - b. He should acquaint himself fully with the character of the work done.

As the pastor, he has a responsibility for the efficiency of the school. The officers and teachers and scholars should all feel the influence of his personality

in their work. It will have a beneficial effect upon the deportment of the classes and will quicken the diligence and fidelity of the teachers if they feel constantly the gentle but firm pressure of the pastor's hand.

- c. He should be recognized as the superior officer in the school.

Not that the pastor should officiously interfere with the regular work of teachers or superintendent, but it should be perfectly understood that he is at liberty to come in and assume charge of the school or of any part of its exercises without being regarded as an intruder or a usurper. The Sabbath School is a part of his pastoral charge and he is the superior officer in it. Where a mission school is properly organized in connection with the congregation, the relation of the pastor to it is the same as to the congregational school.

2. The pastor should visit the scholars regularly in their homes:

- a. So that the children may feel that they have a pastor.

A certain respect is felt for the minister of God, even in the homes of the Christless and the irreligious. And while the children in these homes cannot be expected to have that intelligent appreciation of a pastoral visit that is found in the homes of our people, still a new and helpful influence comes into their lives the moment they are made to feel that they are the objects of pastoral oversight and solicitude. In some way it links the life with God.

- b. That the pastor may become personally acquainted with the children.

It is worth a persistent effort to secure such acquaintance with mission children as to be able to call them by their names. It is humiliating after you have passed a group of children on the street and they

have looked up expectantly into your face, to hear the scoffer among them say: "A—ah, he don't know you!" Now the best way to "know them" is by home visits.

- c. That the parents may know that he is caring for their children.

The pastor needs no better warrant for calling on a family than the fact that the children are attending his school. Ask to see the children. Let it be understood that you have called on their account. Parents will not resent your interest in their little ones. You may even win the parents.

- d. That he may be impressed with his responsibility for the saving of their souls.

A visit to the homes of the children will often reveal that their only hope of salvation is in what he and his church can do for them. Oh, how our hearts would soften toward the wicked, hardened, blessed little wretches which so try our patience and weaken our faith, if we only knew the misery, and hardship, and cruelty of their home life. For these and many other reasons, the pastor should visit all the children of his Sabbath School as he does the members of his flock.

3. He should visit the members of the Sabbath School in sickness.

Where the families from which the children come belong to other churches, discretion is necessary not to give ground of complaint of proselytism. The Golden Rule is an excellent guide in such cases.

I remark—

- a. Such visits are appreciated by children.

There is danger that the young pastor will not know, and that the old pastor will forget, that quite young children are comforted and helped, in sickness, by a pastoral visit. I have more than once been reproved by the remark of a little child, that I did not

come to see him in sickness; and I have been made glad by the manifestation of pleasure on the part of little sufferers when I came to the bedside.\*

b. Such visits may win the hearts of the parents.

When hearts are softened by the blows of affliction or solemnized by the imminence of death, the gospel message frequently finds an entrance where it has long been sought in vain. Even the godless welcome the minister in such an hour. Any failure on the part of the minister to do his duty then may alienate from the Church those who might have been won to Christ and to heaven.

4. He should preach special sermons adapted to the capacities of the children.

There should be something in every sermon suited to childhood. It is wrong to insist that the children should attend church and then provide nothing for their needs. We would not invite children to a banquet merely as spectators, to look on and be good while the grown folks fed on the rich dainties. But besides this regular provision, there should be special sermons for children. These should be—

a. Brief: i. e., the whole service less than an hour.

It is helpful to sing after each point, allowing the children to stand during the singing. When the interest begins to flag it is time to close.

b. Chaste and simple in language.

Recently, one of our ministers announced that he would preach a sermon to the children. The children were present, eager and expectant. The opening sentence ran thus: "Children are the normal conservators of the public weal." The children must have wondered what he had called them. They might have

\* At this point Dr. George was in the habit of recalling a last visit with President Dr. W. P. Johnston's two children, Elinor and Jimmie, stricken with scarlet fever.

felt like the boy when one said to him: "Why, my little fellow, you are quite a philosopher." And he replied: "I hope that means no harm."

c. They should be picturesque.

Children love pictures, and good word pictures fascinate them. Narrative, anecdote, illustration, must characterize the children's sermon.

d. They should be tender and sympathetic.

Children are reached through their emotional natures. But the pathos must be *real*. They are sharp detectives.

e. They should contain the marrow of the gospel.

It is a sin to choose a trifling, insignificant theme. An Action sermon may be changed to a Children's sermon. Great care in the choice of texts is necessary. Genesis xvi, 13: "Thou God seest me"; I Kings iii, 5: "Ask what I shall give thee"; John i, 43: "Follow me"; I Kings xvii, 13: "Make me a little cake first." No theme is too big for a children's sermon, providing it is a gospel theme: for the big truths are plain truths.



## LECTURE VIII

### THE PASTOR AND THE TEACHERS' NORMAL CLASS

It was stated in the last lecture that the pastor should do his teaching, in connection with the Sabbath School, at a point where it would benefit the whole. It will be the aim of this and the following lecture to show how this may be done.

#### I

*The Inefficiency of Teachers is a Prolific Source of Weakness in the Sabbath Schools.*

1. This fact is recognized by the leaders in Sabbath-school work.

H. Clay Trumbull opens his excellent volume on "Teachers and Teaching" with the following statement:

"All Sunday-school teachers ought to be teachers in the Sunday School. Being teachers in the Sunday School, they ought to teach in the Sunday School. In order to teach in the Sunday School, they ought to know what teaching is. An initial purpose of this volume is, so to designate and define the nature and methods, and so to indicate the comparative rarity of proper Sunday-school teaching, as will enable Sunday-school teachers to know whether or not they are, or ever have been, teachers in the Sunday School. There is practical need of honest doubt at this point; especially on the part of those who have never supposed there was any cause of questioning here."

These words seem to be severe; yet Dr. Trumbull

was very familiar with Sabbath-school work, and especially in the large denominations.

2. This inefficiency is not mainly the fault of the teachers.

Perhaps no one knows better than the teachers themselves how poorly equipped they are for their work; and no one more sincerely regrets it than do they. The fault is with the Church in not giving such attention to the selection and training of teachers as the importance of the work demands.

3. One remedy lies in Normal-class training for Sabbath-school teachers.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1879 took the following action:

“Resolved, That the Assembly approve of the action of the Board of Publication in preparing a three years’ course of Normal-class instruction, and earnestly recommend the formation of Normal Classes wherever practicable.”

Similar recommendations have been made by our own synod and in some instances carried out.

## II

### *The Specific Aim of the Normal Class.*

This is twofold—

- I. To instruct teachers in the knowledge of the Bible.

The first essential to teaching is knowing. No matter what skill any one may have in the art of teaching, if he does not know anything he has nothing to teach. The Bible is the Sabbath-school textbook. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all

good works." (II Tim. iii, 16, 17.) The first aim of the Normal Class is to impart Bible instruction.

2. To train teachers in the art of teaching.

The mere possession of Scriptural knowledge will not make an efficient teacher. There must be ability to transfer knowledge to the mind of another. Hence the second aim of the Normal Class is training in the art of teaching. Bishop John H. Vincent, speaking of Normal Class training, says it involves—

- (1) The acquisition of knowledge.
- (2) The testing of the knowledge thus acquired.
- (3) The utilizing of such knowledge for teaching purposes.

### III

#### *The Necessity for the Normal Class.*

1. Other professions have schools of preparation.

We have Medical Colleges for the training of physicians; Law Schools for the education of lawyers; Theological Seminaries for the preparation of ministers, and Normal Schools for the instruction of public school teachers. And even kindergarten work demands a course of study. Why should it be supposed that the religious teaching of the young may be safely entrusted to unskilled, untaught educators?

2. Usually, Sabbath-school teachers have little time for immediate preparation.

In medicine, law, theology, or public school teaching, the whole time is devoted to the study and practice of the profession. The practitioner is a man of one work. Not so the Sabbath-school teacher. As has been well said: "His work is performed under the pressure of secular occupations. Mothers from the nursery; merchants and clerks from the

counter; farmers from the field; lawyers from the bar; jurists from the bench; physicians from the bedside; students from the recitation room." Many of them are wholly deficient in mental discipline, and with no time for preparation must make sad work with the brain of the pupil and the Book of God on the Sabbath. It is unreasonable to expect that such teachers can have fitness for their work without preparation.

3. Because Sabbath-school teaching demands the very highest and best work.
  - a. The immortal soul is the material on which it works.
  - b. The Divine Word is the instrument with which it works.
  - c. The Holy Spirit is the agent through whom it works.
  - d. Eternal life is the goal for which it works.

Arguing for the necessity for Normal-class training for Sabbath-school teachers is like proving an axiom.

#### IV

##### *What should be Embraced in a Normal Course?*

1. Instruction as to the Sabbath School itself.
  - a. As to the Scripture warrant for it.

Teachers should have a full persuasion that they are engaged in the Lord's work and that they are doing it in the Lord's way.

- b. As to its relation to the Church.

The Sabbath School would be more efficient as a missionary agent and as a nursery to the Church, if both teachers and scholars were more impressed with its vital relation to the Church of Christ.

- c. As to the duties of the Sabbath-school teacher.

Much of the failure in Sabbath-school work is due to the ignorance of teachers as to the scope of their duties. Many regard them as confined to the Sabbath-school hour. They should be instructed, both as to what the duties of the teacher are, and how to perform them. For instance, visiting the scholars in their homes, and in sickness, interesting themselves in their scholars as regards their secular affairs, their associations and reading, and their school life.

- d. As to the duties of Sabbath-school officers.

The Sabbath School is an organization in which the duties of the several officers—superintendent, secretary, treasurer, and librarian, bring them into closest contact with the teachers in their work. Sometimes the contact becomes conflict. It is necessary to the smooth running of the machinery that the limits of each office be well understood and conscientiously observed. The uninstructed teacher is liable to assume the prerogatives of the superintendent and the pastor by changing studies, grading classes, or choosing an assistant or a substitute without any consultation.

2. Instruction in the Bible as the Sabbath-school text-book.

The Bible is *the* text-book. All other manuals of instruction are subordinate to this. When the Catechisms, the Testimony and the Confession of Faith are employed, it should be understood that they are used as aids to Bible study.

A Normal Course of Bible study might include—

- a. Studies in Bible Chronology, History, and Geography, with use of maps and charts.

Too large a place should not be given to these subjects in teaching the lessons, but it is of great value to the teacher to be well informed on them.

b. The classification of the books of the Bible.

Every teacher should be familiar with the scope of the simplest classification: historical, poetical, prophetic, and epistolary books.

c. Studies in particular books.

Robert E. Speer has published a small volume called "Studies in Luke," and another "Studies in Acts." The mastery of such Bible studies would be delightful work to earnest Sabbath-school teachers, and greatly helpful in the work. Our Synod at its meeting in 1905, recommended that pastors seek to interest their young people in Bible study, by giving them at convenient times in their pulpit ministrations during that year instruction in the books of Jonah, Obadiah, Galatians, and Philippians. Similar recommendations have been made from time to time. This could be still more efficiently done in Normal Class work.

The Normal Course of Bible study as originally provided by the Presbyterian Church covers three years: Junior, Middle and Senior. The junior year is an outline of the Life of Jesus and embraces a study of the Four Gospels; the middle course consists of biographical outlines of the four principal apostles: Peter, Paul, James, and John; the senior is occupied with Studies in the Old Testament.

3. Instruction as to the Church and Church History.

Sabbath-school teachers ought to be informed as to the nature of the Church and the purposes of its organization—its Doctrine, Government, Worship, and Discipline. Also as to the history of the Church, at least in its general outlines; e. g., Under the Old Testament; Under the New; In the Apostolic Age; During the Dark Ages; The Reformation, and particularly as to the history of our own denomination.

4. Instruction in the Art of Teaching.

## a. How to prepare a lesson.

The first essential to teaching is knowing. There is a great difference between knowing the lesson and knowing about the lesson. It is possible to spend much time and read many lesson helps, and yet come to the class wholly unprepared to teach. The Normal Course should teach teachers how to study.

## b. How to approach a class.

It is a high art. How to open the door of the heart to the entrance of the word, and how to adapt the word for entrance through the open door, can only be learned by the study of the class and of the lesson in its relation to the class.

## c. How to secure attention.

Dr. Trumbull says: "Preparedness amounts to just nothing at all unless the teacher has and holds attention of the scholar. Without the attention of the scholar, the best teacher in the world cannot be a teacher to that scholar."

Shakespeare says:

"The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,  
When neither is attended."

And the poorest teacher can do no worse than the best teacher when neither has attention. A visit to some Sabbath Schools would lead one to think that the art of securing attention is one of the lost arts.

## d. How to ask questions.

Asking printed questions from a lesson leaflet can hardly be called teaching. To be able to ask questions in such a way as to convey to the mind of the scholar the truth which you seem to be drawing from him is worthy of painstaking endeavor. A brief course in a well-conducted Normal Class will furnish suggestions in the art of questioning which it would require years of experience in teaching to discover.

## e. How to use illustrations.

Every intelligent teacher knows the value of illus-

tration in teaching; but how to do it so that the illustration will afford instruction and not be a mere diversion from the lesson, is a high attainment. The Normal Class should give valuable assistance here.

f. How to enforce practical lessons.

A vast amount of Sabbath-school effort is lost because truth is not taught practically. Dr. Wilcox well says: "Many teachers make too much of the *framework* of the lesson. They spend the time on points of sacred history, geography, manners and customs. As to the value of such information, there is a glamour on the eyes of many Bible readers. Measurably such information is needful to a clear idea of Scripture. But the notion is that one may find something far more edifying, spiritually, in knowing the distance between Jerusalem and Jericho than in being able to tell the number of miles from New York to Boston."

To spend time on these things to the neglect of sanctifying and saving truths is to give stones for bread, to feed the children on the husks while we throw away the kernel. The Normal Class should train the teacher rightly to divide the word of truth.

g. How to conduct a review.

Review day is like a night-mare in the day-dreams of many teachers. They have no definite purpose in regard to it, only to fill in the time in some way and get past it for another three months. Now review day ought to be the raciest and most profitable of all the days of the quarter. To make it so, it must be the day for which all the other days are made. The Normal Class should teach how to make it so.

5. Instruction in the work of winning souls.

"He that winneth souls is wise"; and to win souls, one must be wise. The Sabbath-school work which does not result in souls brought to Christ is a failure. Better to let souls perish in ignorance than to bring them into the light of the Gospel and leave them still



unsaved. The teacher must yearn over the members of his class with such love as the apostle expresses when he says: "My little children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

The Normal Class should teach—

- a. Personal work for the salvation of souls.
- b. How to use the Bible in personal work.
- c. How to answer excuses.
- d. How to persuade men to receive Christ.
- e. How to persuade men to unite with the Church.

Young gentlemen, does it not startle you to think of the multitude of teachers entrusted with the care of souls, who yet have not the remotest idea how to lead them to Christ? Is it not the duty of pastors to hold Normal Classes for the instruction of teachers in the art of soul-winning?

## V

### *How should a Normal Class be Conducted?*

1. Select the best materials for it.

After forming acquaintance with the members of his congregation, the pastor will form an opinion of the qualifications and possibilities of each person. He should seek to awaken in each a profound sense of the magnitude and importance of the Sabbath-school work and what could be done in the way of preparation for it. He will soon gather about him a band "whose hearts God has touched," and with these he is ready to begin. It would not be wise to exclude any from its privileges, but care should be taken to see that the best do not exclude themselves.

2. Outline the plan of study.

It is of great importance that the Normal Class be formed with a specific aim, and that the members

when they enter the class know precisely what you propose to do; and make sure when the course closes, that they feel that the thing proposed has been done. The Board of Publication of the Presbyterian Church in 1905 issued a book outlining a Normal Course. It is entitled "The Westminster Teacher Training Course," and embraces the following:

1. Seven lessons on the books of the New Testament.
2. Six lessons on Church History.
3. Nine lessons in Christian Doctrine.
4. Four lessons on Christian Service in Winning Souls.
5. Eight lessons on the Church.
6. Six lessons on the Church at work in the Sunday School.

This is intended as a text-book for use in Normal training. The outline shows its scope.

Another text-book, prepared by Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, contains the following course:

1. Four lessons on The Book and Its Books.
2. Six lessons in Bible History.
3. Six lessons in Bible Geography.
4. Six lessons in Bible Institutions.
5. Six lessons on The Sunday School.
6. Six lessons on The Sunday-school Teacher.
7. Six lessons on The Sunday-school Pupil.

I do not give unqualified endorsement to either of these courses. Let the pastor make out his own course, adapted to his field.

3. Fix a certain number of lessons to be embraced in the course.

Bishop Vincent says: "The movement must not involve too much work, or too much time. Instead of inaugurating a meeting which shall be continued for all time, let those who are interested agree to organize for ten or twelve special meetings. A lim-

ited number of meetings will be attended by persons who could not pledge themselves to be regular attendants for a long series of services."

By this method you can choose the most favorable season of the year.

4. A Normal Course may embrace a series of lectures or papers.

Such subjects as: *The Scripture Warrant for the Sabbath School*; *The Relation of Sabbath School to the Church*; *The Sabbath School as a Missionary Agency*; *The Qualifications of Teachers*, and *Visiting the Sick*, would be appropriate. The pastor, or teachers, or others, could prepare them.

5. The course should provide for spiritual culture.

This is the crowning preparation for the Sabbath-school teacher as it is also of the ministry. Devotional exercises, testimonies of experience, seeking for the presence and power of the Holy Spirit: a course of study on these lines is greatly needed and would tend to sanctify all other gifts and attainments.

## LECTURE IX

### THE PASTOR AND THE TEACHERS' MEETING

MOST pastors cannot find time to conduct a series of Normal classes every year. But such pastors cannot find time for Sabbath-school work at all. The pastor has an especial duty to the young; his specific duty to them is through the Sabbath School; he can best serve them by training their teachers; and, in addition to the special Normal Training courses at intervals, he should take time regularly for the weekly Teachers' Meeting. Doing the two things will make it easier to find the time.

If it is true that a church can be best built up through the Sabbath School, then the young pastor will do well to plan certain, definite, permanent work here. The work of the pastor in the Sabbath School should be done in such a way as to secure two things:

- a. That it will affect and influence the whole school.
- b. That on the Sabbath all his energies of body and mind will be reserved for the pulpit.

These two ends are best secured by his teaching the teachers: first in the Normal Class; and second in the Teachers' Meeting.

#### I

#### *What is the Idea of the Teachers' Meeting?*

1. It is not exclusively for the benefit of the teachers.

Marion Lawrence in *How to Conduct a Sunday School* emphasizes this point. He says: "The true

teachers' meeting is no more exclusively for the teachers than it is for the officers; nor is it for either of these to the exclusion of several other classes. Its intent is to aid all those who have anything to do with the management of the school."

2. The Teachers' Meeting is not for controversy.

Dr. Schauffler in his *Ways of Working* says: "The teachers' meeting should not be a debating society. There is always danger of this. In every school there are some men, and women, too, who are argumentatively inclined. As soon as they strike any question that will bear discussion they grow combative. It matters not what the debate is, if the debaters are allowed to have their own way they will ruin the meeting; for the majority of the teachers have come to the meeting, not for discussion, but for help to handle their classes on the following Sunday. If such discussions are allowed to be carried on, this class of teachers will soon tire of the meeting and will stay away."

To the same effect Bishop Vincent writes: "Too often mere controversy arises on obscure passages, trifling points and doctrinal inferences, and this controversy is sustained by two or three interested parties, while the majority of the teachers are annoyed beyond measure. At first the teachers attend this meeting. But soon their interest wanes. They allow trifling obstacles to prevent their attendance, and I am not surprised that the teachers' meeting is unpopular."

Evidently these two great Sabbath-school instructors have the same doleful picture before their minds of the teachers' meeting talked to death by senseless controversialists. The pastor must let it be understood that such troublers should get up a debating society of their own and find their own audiences.

3. It is not for social enjoyment.

Doubtless much of the very highest social enjoyment will result from it, but this is purely incidental. Here again Dr. Schauffler sounds a note of warning: "This sometimes happens. The young men and maidens gather and are full of their fun. They begin to pass jokes and smart sayings, and are filled with the spirit of banter. This is all well enough in its way and at the proper time; but it will kill any teachers' meeting in the long run. The serious teachers will weary of it, and will show their feelings by staying away. There is a time for everything under the sun; and the teachers' meeting is not the time for polite sky-larking."

4. One object of the teachers' meeting is to study the lesson.

On this point the doctors seem to differ. Dr. Schauffler says: "The teachers' meeting is one for the study of the lesson. In theory all teachers ought to come to the meeting with the lesson prepared; at least in its outline facts. But as a matter of fact most of the teachers do not find time for this, and for that reason I say the meeting must take up the lesson from the very beginning, and the leader see to it that the teachers know the lesson facts." On the other hand, Bishop Vincent says: "The teachers' meeting is not an adult Bible Class for the study of the subject-matter of the next Sunday's lesson. Many teachers' meetings have been utterly ruined by this false conception of its mission."

My own opinion is that Dr. Vincent is right *ideally*, and that Dr. Schauffler is right *practically*, and that you will have to combine the practical with the ideal. It will be found necessary to study the lesson as one feature of the meeting.

5. Another object is to digest the lesson.

You are familiar with the fact that when the preacher has the materials fully collected for his ser-

mon there still remains a very important work in digesting these materials and constructing a sermon. Nor is the minister prepared to preach the sermon until he has passed it through his own personal experience, that his own personality may be stamped on it. The Sabbath-school lesson must pass through a similar process in the minds of the teachers. To facilitate and perfect this work is one important aim of the teachers' meeting.

6. To formulate plans for teaching.

It is well to keep in mind the distinction between the teachers' meeting and the Normal Class. The Normal Class is for the general study of the Bible; the teachers' meeting is for the study of a particular lesson: the former gives general instruction in the Art of Teaching; the latter gives special instruction as to the best method of teaching the lesson for the next Sabbath. How this will be done will appear later.

7. It is for devotional exercises connected with the lesson.

In our great concern about intellectual preparation, we are in danger of undervaluing the devotional. We cultivate the head, and too often neglect the heart. The remarks of Dr. Schauffler on this point are particularly good:

"The work that teachers have in hand has its intensely devotional side and without much prayer will not succeed. So opportunity should be given for requests for prayer, and for a statement of difficulties and encouragements, after which the meeting can unite in prayer, or thanksgiving. Let there never be less than two prayers, and often more. Let prayers be short, strong, specific, not running over all the world and all time, but for that which just at present lies nearest the hearts of the teachers. Teachers should be strongly encouraged to bring special cases

and ask prayer in their behalf. If we had such prayerful meetings we would have more conversions."

## II

### *The Advantages of the Teachers' Meeting.*

1. It helps to secure the thorough study of the lesson.

Many teachers depend on a few hurried glances at lesson helps on the Sabbath morning to carry them through. It is easy to see that what they bring to their classes is like the froth that rises in the pail at a hurried milking, rather than like the cream which rises when the milk stands quietly cooling in the milk-pans. Let us not chide the hard-worked teachers about doing their solemn work in this slipshod way, until we have provided a good teachers' meeting to which they can come and secure time for mature reflection on the lesson.

2. It gives inexperienced teachers the help of the experienced.

That a large proportion of Sabbath School teaching is entrusted to very young and inexperienced hands, is a serious drawback in the work. A well-conducted teachers' meeting will, in a measure, correct this evil.

3. It assists teachers to arrange truth in communicable form.

Teaching involves the transfer of knowledge from the mind of the teacher to the mind of the scholar, and particularly in stimulating his mind and quickening his heart in religious things. A teachers' meeting which stops with getting the truths of the lesson into the minds of the teachers is far from the ideal. That may be a *teaching* meeting, but it is not a *Teachers'* meeting.

4. It gives unity to the Sabbath-school instruction. We have a uniform system of International Les-



sons; it does not follow that we have uniform teaching. Much is gained if the minds of all are concentrated on the same general lines of doctrine and duty. Members from the same family are in different classes. If, when they compare notes at the close of the day, it is found that widely divergent or perhaps even contradictory views have been taught, the effect is to weaken the impression and discredit the teachers and the Bible. On the other hand, if it be found that all have received the same general instruction, the impression will be doubled. To do this, the teachers need to study together under the same leader.

5. It helps to adapt the lessons to the locality.

On this, Bishop Vincent remarks: "Let the lesson be studied with an eye to the peculiarities of the locality in which it is taught. What is there in this lesson for our community? Are there important moral issues brought to the surface, such as *Sabbath Observance*, *Purity of Speech*, *Reverence for Parents*? Which truth shall we make emphatic? Thus, teachers may agree upon a particular point of attack, and such concentration will prove of immense value to that community."

6. It aids the teachers in adapting the lesson to the peculiarities of each class.

While the same doctrines and duties may be taught to all, they should be taught in a very different way. Adaptability is one essential to good teaching. The comparison of plans in the Teachers' meeting will aid each teacher in selecting the method best suited to his scholars.

### III

#### *How to Secure Attendance.*

1. Have a convenient and attractive place of meeting.

Bishop Vincent says: "This means a cheerful, comfortable room, fitted up in good style, with tables, chairs, carpets, maps, blackboards, cabinet of archaeological curiosities and illustrative apparatus, library of books—especially on the art of teaching—magazines and other periodicals." We might say of this, as people often say of Covenanter principles, "that will do for the millennium." In the meantime, aim in that direction.

2. Select carefully the time for meeting.

a. Not on the Sabbath. The pastor has other use for his time and strength on that day, and so have all others.

b. Not on prayer-meeting evening.

Some regard this as the most favorable time. (1) It saves an extra evening. (2) It secures the attendance of teachers at prayer-meeting. (3) It encourages prayer for the Sabbath School. (4) Where the golden text is used in the prayer-meeting, it is easy to combine the two. But there are reasons against it which outweigh all these considerations, the chief of which is that each of these should have an evening to itself.

Lawrence says: "It is desirable to give a whole evening to it and this will be found little enough when its real value is understood. A teachers' meeting tacked on before or after another meeting, while a great deal better than none at all, falls far short of the possibilities of this agency. As to the best time in the week, we favor Friday night, if it does not conflict with the prayer-meeting. . . . However, any night in the week, provided you can have the whole evening, is better than any other night on which you can have but part of the evening. Some will say they cannot spend two nights in the week giving one each to the prayer-meeting and the teachers' meeting.

We have often heard this and used to believe it; but our observation is that in practice it is not so. If the two meetings are properly conducted, the one should create a relish for the other."

3. Limit the time to be spent in it.

Some good people love to sing of a happy land—

"Where congregations ne'er break up  
And Sabbaths have no end,"

but the ideal Teachers' meeting is not conducted on that plan. There is no surer way to wear out a teachers' meeting than to permit it to drag its weary length along interminably. We cannot successfully introduce the measures that belong to an "endless life" into the things of time. Lawrence says: "An hour and a quarter is quite short enough: an hour and a half is much better for the whole meeting." This is a liberal allowance, in my judgment.

4. Guard against the waste of time.

Every teachers' meeting, like every prayer-meeting, has its time-killer. It is easy to fritter away a precious hour speculating about something God has not revealed. The pastor should exercise his office as a *Ruling Elder* and force the meeting to run in proper channels.

5. Never postpone the meeting on account of the fewness of the numbers present.

It always tends to discourage and break down the meeting, if it is held irregularly. Dr. Thomas Sproull used to say that when you hear the children ask: "Mamma, are we going to have worship to-night?" you may be sure you are in a home where family worship is only occasional. It is a bad sign if, when the regular night for teachers' meeting arrives, people are heard inquiring, "Are we going to have teachers' meeting to-night?" *Of course we are.*

## IV

*How to Conduct the Teachers' Meeting.*

1. Usually the pastor should be the teacher.

The only exception to this rule is when he is disabled or necessarily absent, or when there is some one who can do it better.

2. The teachers should study the lesson beforehand.

What has been said above as to teaching the lesson in the teachers' meeting, is in no way inconsistent with this point. Vincent tells of a pastor who kept up a successful teachers' meeting for many years, who always expected any of his teachers to recite the lesson from memory immediately after the opening of the meeting. The law of the Kingdom is, "To him that hath shall be given." The one who brings nothing to the meeting should not expect to carry much away.

3. It is well to secure a brief analysis of the lesson.

The central truths of the lesson must be grasped and arranged before they can be effectively taught. This requires a careful analysis. One may be appointed beforehand to give this outline, or the pastor may do it himself.

4. The practical lessons to be taught should be determined upon.

It is not enough that each teacher be asked to suggest a practical lesson, but these should be considered, and a few of them selected and firmly fixed in the minds of all, to be enforced in the classes.

5. There should be a comparison of views, where the lesson-helps differ.

It is an element of weakness in the teacher if uncertainty exists as to the meaning of the lesson. It is hurtful if different teachers give different or op-

posing interpretations. A prayerful effort should be made to reach the mind of the Spirit.

6. Anecdotes and illustrations may be called for.

These should be studied with reference to their suitableness, and the pastor should rule out anything questionable or liable to be abused.

7. Several specific thoughts may be assigned respectively to each of a dozen teachers for presentation at the meeting. This method is commended by Lawrence and he calls it The Angle Method. He suggests the following:

Angle No. 1. Approach: i. e., Last Lesson and circumstances leading up to this lesson.

Angle No. 2. The Lesson Story: i. e., Told in his own words.

Angle No. 3. Analysis: i. e., Outline for studying and teaching the lesson.

Angle No. 4. References: Parallel passages bearing on the lesson.

Angle No. 5. Biography: Names of persons, classes and nations mentioned.

Angle No. 6. Orientalisms: Oriental customs and manners referred to in lesson.

Angle No. 7. Principal Teachings: Doctrinal and practical.

Angle No. 8. First Step: How to secure attention.

Angle No. 9. Primary Work: Features best adapted to children.

Angle No. 10. Objects: i. e., Such as can be shown in class in object teaching.

Angle No. 11. Illustrations: Incidents or facts illustrative of the lesson.

Angle No. 12. Practical Points: Application to every-day life.

In conclusion let me say that the conscientious pas-

tor will form a high ideal as to what the teachers' meeting ought to be, and will sacrifice much to realize that ideal. Determine that your Sabbath School shall be equipped with genuine teachers. Dr. Trumbull says: "How many legs does a calf have, *if you count his tail one?* Counting a tail a leg, doesn't make it one. A calf has only four legs, however you may count them. How many teachers are in all the Sunday Schools in the United States? There are two ways of answering that question and the answers would differ widely. It makes a vast difference to a Sunday School whether it has teachers who fill their places, or only teachers who hold them."

Young gentlemen, the conclusion of the whole matter is this: Teach the teachers, in the Normal Class, that they may know the Bible as a whole; and that they may be trained in the art of teaching: and teach the teachers in the teachers' meeting, that they may know the particular lesson for the next Sabbath and how to adapt it to their particular classes. *Teach the teachers* and you will teach the *whole school*.

## LECTURE X

### THE MANAGEMENT OF THE SABBATH SCHOOL

THE aim of the Sabbath School is threefold, namely: Instruction, Conversion, and Edification. Whatever in our Sabbath-school management does not conduce to one or other, or all of these results, should be laid aside; and whatever changes are necessary to promote these ends should be made. This leads us to consider the organization and management of the school.

#### I

#### *The Superintendent.*

1. He should be chosen by the session.

This is a matter on which views differ. Some say, by the school; but manifestly this is too sacred a trust to be placed in the hands of children, many of whom are not even members of the congregation. Others maintain that he should be chosen by the teachers. They are especially interested in the work; are well qualified to make the selection; and this method would promote harmony between the superintendent and the workers. It is, however, liable to abuses. If the superintendent selects the teachers and they choose the superintendent, the control of the school is left in the hands of a little circle. In my opinion the selection of the superintendent belongs to the session, for the following reasons:

- a. Because the session represents the whole congregation.

The people choose the pastor and elders; and, when these elect the superintendent, he represents the whole people.

- b. Because the session is responsible for the work of the school.

They are the spiritual overseers of the flock. To take out of their hands the choice of the superintendent of the Sabbath School, is to hamper them in fulfilling their trust.

- c. Because this tends to promote harmony between the session and the school.

This is not less important than to have harmony between the superintendent and the teachers.

- d. In order to maintain the authority of the session over the school.

If the chief officer of the school is chosen independently of the session, it is difficult to see how their authority would remain unimpaired. Authority must go with responsibility. For these, and other reasons, I think it is safe to lay down the rule that, in general, the session should elect the superintendent. It does not follow that he should be of their own number.

## 2. The qualifications of a good superintendent.

An old gentleman, speaking in one of our Sabbath-school conventions, said: "Mr. President: I think that God has not made many good superintendents." The probabilities are that the old man was wrong in placing the responsibility for the scarcity on God. Men have not done their part in cultivating their divine gifts, and the Church has not done her part in setting aside the manifestly disqualified, and in seeking out those whom God has properly endowed for this great office.

The superintendent should be,—



## a. An eminent Christian.

Dr. Plummer divides professors into three classes, viz., unconverted professors, doubtful Christians, and eminent Christians. Men have sometimes questioned whether a non-professor, or even an unconverted man, might not be a teacher in the Bible Class; but no one is so blind as to suggest that an unregenerate man might be chosen as superintendent. Doubtful Christians go in a zig-zag course and make the road to heaven so long that there is danger that, in the brevity of life, they will not get there. Such Christians are not safe guides for little children. All superintendents should be chosen from the class of *eminent Christians*.

## b. He should be orthodox.

It has been said, "Orthodoxy is *my* doxy; heterodoxy is *your* doxy." I have no objection to that way of putting it. The dangerous people are those who pride themselves in having no doxy at all, or rather who esteem all doxies as equally good.

## (1) He should be evangelically orthodox.

There is a standard of evangelical orthodoxy, recognized by all evangelical Christians. Unitarians protested because they found themselves excluded from the Conference of Christian Churches held in New York in 1905. No one who calls in question the inspiration of the Scriptures and their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, or who denies the true Divinity of our Lord, should preside over a Christian Sabbath School.

## (2) He should be denominationally orthodox.

I do not hesitate to say that any Church that has a right to exist as a separate denomination is bound to select its superintendents from men who hold with unwavering fidelity to the faith and practices of the Church.

- c. He should be a man of practical plans and executive ability.

It does not require great practical talent to fill the office as it is frequently done, i. e., by opening and closing the school by singing, reading, and prayer. But to conduct these devotions so as to be real worship; to select and direct the teachers; to govern the school, grade the classes, and visit in the homes of the scholars requires a many-sided man.

- d. He should be sympathetic.

In no department of Church work is it more important to have a sympathetic heart. He must be like the Good Shepherd of whom it is said: "He shall gather the lambs in His arms; and carry them in His bosom."

- 3. The duties of the superintendent.

- a. To conduct the general exercises of the school.

- b. To receive and classify the scholars.

In too many schools the scholars are left to classify themselves. This is an end to all order.

- c. To aid in the selection of teachers.

The question of how teachers should be chosen is an open one. Certainly the superintendent should have a voice and much weight in the choice. That the teacher retiring from the charge of a class should bring in another to take his place without consultation with the superintendent, is not allowable. The class belongs to the school, not to the teacher; and the school is under the care of the superintendent.

- d. He may review the lesson each Sabbath.

The time occupied in this should be very brief, but it is the right and duty of the superintendent, if he is capable of it, to sum up the work of the hour.

- e. To arrange for the quarterly review.

- f. To visit the scholars in their homes.

All that was said as to the duty of the pastor in

this regard may with equal propriety be applied to the superintendent.

## II

### *The Teachers.*

#### 1. Who should choose the teachers?

- a. The superintendent should have much to do with this.

It is not just to hold the superintendent responsible for the success of the school, and yet ignore his authority in the appointment of the teachers. His constant contact with the school affords opportunity for him to decide as to the work being done in the classes.

- b. The session should be consulted.

The session should have a permanent committee on the Sabbath School, part of whose office should be to consult with the superintendent in securing suitable teachers.

- c. The pastor should have a veto power in all the appointments.

As the pastor of the congregation, and the superior officer of the Sabbath School, he should have the final voice as to who may be set to impart instruction to the members of his flock, for all of whom he must give account to God. One of the great defects in the modern Sabbath School is the irresponsible way in which teachers are chosen.

#### 2. What are the qualifications of teachers?

- a. They should have a good mental endowment.

Scholars must have respect for the mental qualities of their teachers or they will not be profited by their instruction; and it is well to bear in mind in selecting teachers that the children of this day are not slow to detect a deficiency. The Sabbath-school teacher

is weighed in the balance with the day-school teacher and should not suffer by the comparison.

b. They should have good social qualities.

Too little attention is usually paid to the social element in the Sabbath-school class. This is one reason why children usually prefer young people for their instructors. These have a social sympathy with them which the staid old elder, who knows so much more, may lack. The teacher that can enter into the social nature of the children has a divine gift. This helps to the awakening of a class spirit that may become wonderfully influential. The interchange of visits as between teacher and pupil, kindly attention in sickness, deep interest in all that concerns the welfare of the scholars, even extending to their school studies, their occupations, their life plans: all are connected with good teaching.

c. They should be of exemplary life.

True spiritual power in teaching cannot be found apart from consistent, upright living; and, it is quite possible among Christian young people to find many of high purpose and high ideals of life. Habits of reading afford a good test; it will usually be found that young men and young women who enjoy the Bible and have a desire to find out what books may be classed as good literature, and to read these,—such young men and young women are likely to be of right habits of life. Theater-goers, dancers, and card-players are not good teachers, and will not often be found seeking places in the school. The personal habits of the teacher are of the utmost importance of course; and any teacher will make sacrifices rather than mislead those following in his steps. The tobacco user who will not give up that habit for the sake of the children committed to him is not sufficiently impressed with his responsibility. In the long run, as pastors, you will find the noblest of lives

ready to be guided wisely into proper methods of teaching. It is one of the beautiful things in a pastor's life.

### III

#### *The Exercises of the School.*

##### 1. The devotional exercises.

###### a. All should be required to be present.

There are many, both in Sabbath School and Church, who regard the devotional exercises as mere *preliminaries*, and, if they are in time for the teaching of the lesson, they are satisfied. This false view must be corrected. If prizes are given for prompt attendance, they should be conditioned absolutely on being present for the devotional exercises.

The difficulty about attendance on the closing exercises arises where advanced Bible classes are taught in separate rooms. They often find the time too short, and, becoming interested, are unwilling to respond to the closing bell. In ordinary cases attendance should be made imperative. Where there is a large Infant Department they may have their own closing exercises.

###### b. They must be conducted with reverence.

Never begin until perfect quiet is secured. Permit nothing to be carried on that will divert the mind from the exercises of worship. Secure reverence in outward form, as essential to heart reverence.

###### c. Use familiar Psalms and tunes.

A mistake is sometimes made in seeking to adapt the Psalms to the lesson, rather than choosing that which the children can sing. In most schools it is better to use the same tune always to the same Psalm. Children love to sing and should be encouraged to memorize Psalms. Insist that the

teachers join in the singing. Do not permit young men, and maidens in their teens, to form the idea that they are too big to sing, or that it is more polite to sit with closed lips.

- d. The prayers should be appropriate and brief.

Dr. Amos R. Wells says: "In no way can more Christianity be taught in less time than by a good prayer. And yet," he adds, "I know of no point in Sunday-school management regarding which superintendents are more careless. The children must listen to Magellan prayers, that circumnavigate the globe; to mechanical prayers, cast in stereotyped forms; to officious prayers, that volunteer to teach the coming lesson; to peacock prayers, that flaunt big words and fine phrases; to wrinkled prayers, dealing with experiences into which the children will not grow for three decades.

"In some schools the superintendent always makes the prayer himself, in the same terms, and tones, and order, and for the same things. Elsewhere, he invites others to perform this service, but, with pitiless impartiality, calls upon all that will, whether they are capable or totally unfit."

Having thus pointedly described the evil, Dr. Wells lays down the following points:

- "(1) No one should be invited to pray merely for policy's sake.
- "(2) Give notice beforehand to the one expected to pray.
- "(3) Insist on all assuming a reverent attitude.
- "(4) Sometimes have silent prayer, the superintendent closing.
- "(5) Occasionally hold a prayer-meeting at the close of the lesson hour."

In regard to the last he suggests: "This will do much to inspire a deeper spirit of worship; that is,

if the scholars themselves take part. And these Sunday-school prayer-meetings are magnificent opportunities for drawing the net. Do not hold them so frequently as to be burdensome. Keep them brief and earnest. Let the teachers work for them in their classes and use them as tests for their teaching. Above all, expect conversions in them, and, if you are faithful and faith-filled, you will get them."

e. See that all have Bibles and use them.

The dearth of Bibles in many of our Sabbath Schools is a disgrace. One of the striking features of John Wanamaker's great school is the Bible in the hands of every scholar, and an incident at the opening of each session of the school is the call for the show of Bibles.

2. The study in the classes.

a. Secure to each class the utmost privacy possible.

Even a curtain, slipping on wires and enclosing the class, is of value. Churches should be planned to provide separate rooms for classes.

b. Secure the classes against interruption.

A method should be devised that will enable the secretary, the treasurer, and the librarian to do their work without interrupting the teacher. It is a great hardship to have some general officer pounce down upon the class just when the teacher by patient, earnest effort has secured attention. Each class should have its monitor.

3. What should be taught in the Sabbath Schools?

a. Direct, systematic Bible study.

Whether the International lessons, or some other scheme, is an open question.

b. Memorizing the Catechisms, Psalms and Scripture.

It is a weakness in our training of the youth that there is so little memorizing in these days.

- c. There should be a class for inquirers.

When it is known that the direct and persistent aim of the school is conversion, and that converts are to be united with the Church, it should also be understood that special attention will be given to the awakened and inquiring. They should have the instruction of a very sincere, intelligent and experienced teacher.

- 4. The collection.

- a. There should be a Sabbath-school collection.

This is a part of Christian culture, a means of grace and a fountain of joy. Remember the words of Christ when He said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

- b. It should be for a special object, clearly understood.

The children should know the object to which their gifts are devoted; and that in giving for that purpose, they are giving to the Lord.

- c. The object should be something outside of the school.

The congregation should support the school. Then the money of the school may be devoted to congregational objects if that is more needful than the public work of the Church. If the children understand that they are giving money to buy books and candy for themselves it will be difficult to impress them that they are thereby giving to Christ.

- d. The giving should be done as a service to God.

Some schools always speak of it as presenting the offering to the Lord; and some formally dedicate it to God by prayer. This should not be carried to an extreme.

- 5. Review of the school, weekly—

- a. Should be by superintendent, or pastor;
- b. Should be brief and pointed;
- c. Should be practical and impressive.



## IV

*Should the Sabbath School have a Library?*

1. The objections to having a library.
  - a. The books are often injurious: i. e., wrong in morals; unsound in doctrine; unfit for Sabbath reading; and mentally dissipating.
  - b. The best books are seldom read.
  - c. The attention of the school is diverted by the distribution.
  - d. Dissatisfaction is bred among the scholars.
  - e. The money is better spent for papers and prizes.
2. The advantages of a library.
  - a. Provides reading matter for those who have little.
  - b. Enables teachers to superintend the scholars' reading.
  - c. Aids in securing attendance.

It is evident from the discussions, that in many cases the library has not been a blessing; it is equally evident that the evils are not inherent and necessary, but may be avoided and the library be made an efficient arm of the school; and, finally, that it is a mere incident in Sabbath-school management, and has in many cases been greatly over-estimated. Where it is introduced, the greatest care should be exercised in the selection of the books.

## V

*Evils to be Guarded Against or Corrected.*

Before closing this lecture I wish to refer to several evils that have seriously damaged the good that would otherwise have resulted from Sabbath-school work.

1. The incompetence of teachers.

It is universally admitted that this is a prevalent and very serious evil. I do not emphasize it to find fault with the teachers, but to urge pastors to train their teachers. The world is full of a wonderful latent power in the devotion of earnest Sabbath-school teachers. Train them.

2. Irregularity of attendance.

This is another crying evil. The great discrepancy between the enrollment and the average attendance tells the story. The best corrective that I know, after the personal influence of the superintendent and the teacher, is the prize system. I do not share the scruples of some about giving rewards to children for faithfulness in doing their duty.

3. Tardiness in coming.

I should seek to correct this by confining the prizes to those who are present at the opening. It is not well to allow absence from the devotional exercises and reward attendance on the class studies.

4. Disorder in the room.

The only hope is in getting good order established as the fixed habit of the school. One bad boy can keep a whole class in a rumpus; and one disorderly class can make trouble for the whole school. The pastor's visits to the school will tend to promote good order. What to do with the noisy, unruly scholars is a great problem. One thing is settled, viz., that they should not be permitted to remain in the school as disorderly scholars. Another is that they *should remain*. It is useless to scold the school in general; find the boy that starts the disorder, then devise a way for making him over.

5. Children regarding the Sabbath School as a substitute for the Church service is an evil that should never be condoned; much less parents regarding the Sabbath School as a substitute for home instruction. *The Sabbath School is not to supplant either the Church or the home.*

## LECTURE XI

### THE GRADED SYSTEM

MUCH of our Sabbath-school work is superficial. This department of Church activity is constantly demanding and receiving attention; and yet it is generally conceded that the results are somewhat disappointing. An argument was made against the use of tobacco, that statistics would show that a large proportion of the prisoners in the penitentiaries had been tobacco users. The reply was made, that statistics would also show that a large percentage of the prisoners in the penitentiary had been Sunday-school scholars.

Nor is the failure merely that the children, after spending five or ten years in the Sabbath School go out without being converted; but they frequently go out without being instructed. They do not know the Holy Scriptures which are able to make them wise unto salvation. Improvements in the methods of work are now being earnestly sought. Prominent among schemes for improvement is the graded system.

As far back as 1895 our Synod recommended Sabbath-school officers and teachers to make a special study of the graded system with a view to introducing it into our Sabbath Schools. (Min. of Synod, 1895, p. 195.)

#### I

#### *What is Included in a Graded System?*

##### 1. Graded departments.

Lawrence, in *How to Conduct a Sunday School*,

recommends the division of the school into seven departments. This includes a Home Department and a Teachers' Training Department.

The Committee on Education of the International Sunday School Association recommends five departments to be named as follows:

- a. The Primary Department.
- b. The Junior Department.
- c. The Intermediate Department.
- d. The Senior Department.
- e. The Adult Department.

It is probable that in many of our Sabbath Schools three departments will be found sufficient; yet, if we are to have a uniform course of study, the department grades should be uniform.

2. A graded classification of scholars in the several departments.

The basis of this classification may be

- a. According to age.
- b. According to attainments.

Dr. Schauffler describes the grading in his school as follows: "Two primary classes: In the one, go all who cannot read. In the other, those who can read easy words when printed on the blackboard. As soon as they can read with facility they are transferred into the intermediate school, where they are put in such classes as their ages fit them for. In the intermediate department all classes are graded according to age, the ages stretching over three years; e. g., eleven to fourteen, twelve to fifteen, thirteen to sixteen. In the higher department there are two grades: (a) Juniors, from sixteen to eighteen; (b) Seniors, from eighteen years upwards." According to this method the primary department is classified according to attainments; the other departments according to age and attainments.

The grading of the school into departments and

the classification of the scholars should be carefully made and maintained. On this point Lawrence says: "It is one thing to grade a Sunday School, and quite another to keep it graded. It will be readily observed that if teachers enroll in their classes any one who may happen to apply for membership, and if scholars are permitted to bring their friends promiscuously into their own classes, the system of grading will soon be broken down." There must be a superintendent for the whole school, who alone shall have authority to classify the scholars.

3. The teachers should be graded.

This requires two things—a. The teachers should be assigned to the department for which they are especially qualified. b. Usually, they should not pass with their scholars from one department to another. The same principles should prevail here as in the public schools. Successful teachers in one department are not transferred to another. The scholars pass on, the teacher remains, and, by long experience, becomes a specialist in his own department. A teacher may be allowed to carry his scholars through the successive courses in one department, but should not pass from one department to another.

4. A graded system of instruction.

In the International Sunday-school lesson the basis of instruction is the same for all classes. The effort is made in the preparation of Lesson Helps to adapt the treatment of the lesson to children and to adults. Very few Helps attempt anything beyond two grades. When it is undertaken to establish a graded school, it is necessary to adopt either an entirely different system or a supplemental system to be used in connection with the International lessons. The Westminster System of Graded Supplemental Lessons by James A. Worden, D.D., is published by the Presby-

terian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1334 Chestnut St., Philadelphia.

1. The Westminster Supplemental System has five grades or departments—
  - a. The Primary Department.
  - b. The Junior-intermediate Department.
  - c. The Senior-intermediate Department.
  - d. The Normal Department.
  - e. The Adult Department.
2. These five grades are divided into twelve courses.
  - a. The Primary Department has one course.
  - b. The Junior-intermediate has four courses.
  - c. The Senior-intermediate has three courses.
  - d. The Normal has three courses.
  - e. The Adult has one continuous course.

A school graded according to the Westminster Supplemental System would have five departments and twelve stages of progress. A leaflet giving a full description of the different courses of study by years can be secured at the Presbyterian Book Rooms, Pittsburgh.

3. The Bible Study Union (or Blakeslee) System has four courses—
  - a. The Junior Course for the youngest classes.
  - b. The Intermediate Course for the boys and girls.
  - c. The Progressive Course for the young people and adults.
  - d. The Bible Class Course for the adults.
4. These four courses are divided into ten grades.
  - a. The Junior Course has three grades.
  - b. The Intermediate Course has three grades.
  - c. The Progressive Course has three grades.
  - d. The Bible Class has one continuous course.

The danger in such courses is that they may get away from the Bible. Full instruction as to the

Blakeslee System can be obtained by addressing The Bible Study Publishing Co., 250 Devonshire St., Boston, Mass.

5. Stated examinations and promotions.

a. This is an essential part of the system.

It may be necessary to reach this result gradually, but the graded system is not complete without it. Dr. James A. Worden, who was for many years General Superintendent of Sabbath Schools in the Presbyterian Church, asks: "Shall there be examinations?" and answers:—"This question must be left for each school to determine for itself. Some schools will promote the scholars after requiring them to pass an examination; others will promote them simply on the recommendation of the teachers." The difficulty with the latter method is the tendency to lower the standard.

b. Promotion should be made at stated times.

Lawrence, on this point, recommends a regular promotion day at least once a year, and that the promotion should involve a change of seats if possible, and that these promotions be made a prominent feature of the school, the services being conducted by the pastor and superintendent. Some schools give certificates of promotion which are attractive and inexpensive; and in some schools every child on leaving the primary department is presented with a Bible.

c. Promotions should usually be on the basis of attainments made.

The Sabbath School is an educational institution and should approach more and more to the most approved educational methods; and this means regular examinations at stated periods and promotions based on work successfully done. But the standard should not be placed too high. Dr. Worden says: "We would call attention to the wisdom of making exceptions of all scholars whose attendance has been faithful, whose conduct has been good, who have made



honest efforts, and yet have failed to learn the supplemental lessons; and of passing such scholars and promoting them on recommendation of their teachers." Lawrence says: "Supplemental work should be carried on as a feature of the grading of the school, but should not be made a rigid and absolute condition of promotion. Those who satisfactorily complete the supplemental work may be promoted with honor, i. e., supplemental work should be made a condition of earning the honors of the school, rather than a condition of promotion."

One of our own ministers writes: "We put upon rolls of honor those scholars that pass, and condition those who do not; and if they fail at the end of one year to fulfill the condition of the previous year we take them out of the class and put them into what we call the 'drone' class. No one has as yet reached that class. Many have turned in the other direction as they neared it."

I would emphasize the fact that there must be sympathetic consideration for unfortunate children who have no encouragement or assistance at home. Some of these little ones have hard lives in the day-schools. The Sabbath School should help them to bear their trials and not increase them.

## II

### *The Advantages of the Graded System.*

1. It promotes uniformity in the classes.

It is impossible for a teacher to work effectively when classes are made up haphazard, or by elective affinity without reference to attainments.

2. It stimulates effort in order to secure promotion.

Every one understands the operation of this principle in school and college life.

3. It aids in storing the mind with truth.

The very idea of the graded system is to make a thorough, systematic and prolonged study in the Bible. Extended portions of Scripture are memorized; texts setting forth certain doctrines are grouped together and committed; Psalms are learned by heart; the Catechisms are mastered; the attainments made are tested by examinations, and riveted in the memory by frequent reviews. When such a system is in efficient hands the result must be a great advance.

4. It increases respect for the Sabbath School.

Dr. Schauffler says: "The scholars themselves will be pleased to see the methods to which they have become accustomed in their daily life adopted in their Sunday instruction. The child of to-day, in America at least, respects the institution that compels him to work, and gives him the consciousness of actual acquisition. Children have been run after and coaxed and bribed to come to the Sabbath School, and then coddled and palavered and permitted to 'go as you please,' until the whole affair has come to be the synonym for that which is weak and effeminate and unpractical. Men show their contempt for a book by calling it 'Sunday-school literature,' and for a political theory or method by calling it 'Sunday-school politics.'"

The aim of the graded system is to make the Sabbath School a real school that will demand work of its members and give them something real and substantial in return and thus lift this department of Church work into a position of dignity and power worthy of a divine institution.

I bespeak your especial attention to certain objections to the graded system, and to the caution necessary in choosing an orthodox system.

## III

*Objections to the Graded System.*

1. That the time used in teaching the graded studies is needed for teaching the International lesson.

Of course this applies only to schools using the supplemental system. In the Blakeslee system the whole time is given to the graded studies.

In reply to this objection a pastor of considerable experience writes: "Invariably this objection comes from teachers who give every evidence in their teaching that they would not get over the lesson if they had all day for it. Lack of system is their trouble, rather than lack of time."

2. The scholars object because it necessitates study.

This is the one thing in its favor: It does require study. Teachers who thoroughly believe in the system will overcome this objection. The pastor above quoted says further: "We have lost no scholars as yet because of its introduction, and even if we were to lose some, that would not induce us to abandon it; for its operation is a powerful stimulus to the school as a whole."

3. It breaks the tie between teacher and scholar.

This objection seems to have more weight. When relations are what they should be a very strong bond of affection grows up between the faithful teacher and the pupils of his class. The same is true in our public schools. The children are often greatly attached to their teachers, and teachers to their scholars; but there is mutual joy to both teacher and scholar when the separation comes through the promotion of the scholar. And, in all above the primary depart-

ment, teacher and scholars may advance together through the whole course included in any department.

#### IV

#### *What System Should be Adopted?*

This question I am not prepared to answer. Above all else, the Bible must be offered in its purity. What I have said bears particularly on the method of grading, not on the orthodoxy of either of the systems mentioned. Of course, doubt on this point, even the slightest doubt, would more than offset all the advantages any system has to offer. The Westminster Supplemental System is so called because it retains the International lessons and provides a supplemental course; the Blakeslee System drops the International lessons and has an independent course of Bible study, going through the Bible twice in the primary department, and three times in the main school department.

In the Westminster system the grading is done, not on the International lesson studies, but on the supplemental course. In the other system the grading is mainly on the Bible studies. Until the Church takes some action, each pastor and session should make a careful study of the different systems and decide which is best adapted to his own school. An eclectic system which would use the Blakeslee system of Bible studies and the Westminster as to the Catechism, substituting Psalms for hymns, would secure the best out of both systems. Some suggestions as to introducing the graded system will come in the next lecture; let me suggest that there is a life work here for some ardent young Covenanter, preparing such a system.

## LECTURE XII

### THE HOME DEPARTMENT

W. A. DUNCAN, Ph. D., President of the International Home Department Association, writing in the *Sunday School Times* of Nov. 4, 1899, says: "The Home Department is no longer an experiment. In numberless cases it has demonstrated its great usefulness and has shown that it is extraordinarily adapted for the purpose of reaching those outside of the Church and Sunday School. Therefore it has become not merely the privilege, but the duty, of every Sunday School to organize a Home Department. The very same reasons exist for having a Home Department as for having a Main, Junior, or Primary Department."

This comparatively new department is now fully recognized in the different denominations by the preparation of special literature adapted to its use. The United Presbyterian Board issues a Quarterly entitled "The Bible Readers' Home Companion, an Aid to the Home Department." The Presbyterian Board publishes "The Westminster Home Department Quarterly." *The Sunday School Times* has given special attention to the development of this department. In 1895 our Synod recommended "that this department be introduced at once into all the Sabbath Schools." This recommendation has not been carried into effect generally. The present lecture will be devoted to a consideration of the Home Department.

## I

*The Specific Object of the Home Department.*

1. To reach those who cannot attend the Sabbath School.

Dr. Duncan in the article referred to above says: "All Christian work is based on the great commission: 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.' Until the Home Department was organized the Sunday School was not fulfilling its obligations under this commission, for it offered an opportunity to study the Word of God only to those who would attend the regular sessions of the Sunday School. Sunday-school membership was confined to attendants upon Sunday-school services. By a simple change in the basis of Sunday-school membership, the Home Department expanded the walls of the Sunday-school room, so as to include the whole parish. This change in the basis of membership is the fundamental and vital idea upon which Home Departments are organized."

2. To reach those who will not attend the Sabbath School.

A little booklet entitled "About the Home Department," published by John D. Wattles & Co., Philadelphia, Pa., says: "The Home Department is designed primarily for those persons in the immediate community and elsewhere who cannot attend the regular sessions of the Sunday School; but it may also properly include those who for various reasons are not disposed to attend."

It has been tersely stated that there are two general classes of people whom it seeks to reach, the "Can'ts" and the "Won'ts." Evidently the Home Department does not lack for a field, whatever may be said of the character of the soil.

## II

*Who are Eligible to Membership in the Home Department?*

1. Children who are too young, and men and women who are too aged to attend the public services of the Sabbath School.
2. Mothers who are kept at home by family cares and duties.
3. Confirmed invalids, i. e., the "shut-ins."
4. Those disqualified for taking part in the public exercises by want of bodily senses, i. e., blind, deaf, dumb.
5. Those whose professions prevent them from attendance, e. g., physicians and nurses.
6. Those living at a distance or absent from home, e. g., commercial travelers.
7. Those who could attend, but will not,
  - a. Because of indifference, worldliness or indolence.
  - b. Because of prejudice against the Church, the pastor, or some one connected with the school.
  - c. Because of diffidence—conscious of their ignorance and unwilling to expose it.

The report on Sabbath Schools made to our Synod in 1895 says: "In every community there are persons who from necessity, or choice, are in no way connected with Sabbath Schools and not infrequently a large proportion of such are found among professing Christians. Any method of Sabbath-school work that will enlist the attention and meet the wants of these, and, at the same time, carry the Word of God into the homes of the irreligious and ungodly will be welcomed. Such the Home Department has proved wherever operated."

## III

*The Method of Work in the Home Department.*

This must, in some measure, be determined by the pastor and Sabbath-school workers in each congregation.

1. The literature prepared for its special use includes—

a. A home class membership card.

It reads as follows: "I, the undersigned, hereby join the Home Class Department of the — Sabbath School. In so doing I promise, unless providentially hindered, to spend at least one half-hour each week, either on or before the Sabbath, in the study of the regular Sabbath-school lesson. Name— Date— Address—"

b. Certificate of membership in the Home Class Department.

This reads as follows: "This certifies that — has been enrolled as a member of the Home Department Class, and is entitled to all the privileges enjoyed by any member of the regular school. —Superintendent —Pastor —Date." This certificate, duly signed by the pastor and superintendent, is given to the scholar.

c. A Home Department Quarterly.

These are prepared with Lesson Helps, questions with space for written answers, and a record in which to report the time devoted to study each week.

d. Home Department envelope.

This is a prepared envelope suitable for entering a report of the lessons studied, and enclosing a quarterly offering to the Lord.

There is other literature, but this is sufficient for inaugurating the work on a systematic basis.



2. Course of procedure in conducting the Home Department.
  - a. Enroll all non-attenders at Sabbath School who will sign the membership card.
  - b. Classify them, assigning each to a visitor.
  - c. Provide each member with a lesson quarterly and a quarterly report envelope.
  - d. At the close of each quarter the visitors, or teachers, collect these quarterlies and envelopes, and give out the new ones for the next quarter.
  - e. The visitor, or teacher, should make regular quarterly reports of his class, or district, to the regular officers of the school.
  - f. Where the Home Department becomes large, it may have a special superintendent and secretary, as assistants to the regular officers of the school.

3. Methods of classification.

These will be determined by the circumstances.

There may be—

- a. The individual class, where there is but one who will engage to do the work.
  - b. The family class, i. e., where different members of a family engage in it.
  - c. The district class, where there are a number of members in a neighborhood under one teacher or visitor.
  - d. Foreign class, composed of members who are learning the English language. Some may not be able to study for themselves and each scholar may require a teacher.
4. The privileges and relations of the Home Department, classes and teachers, are identical with those of the regular school.

The pastor of the Sabbath School owes the same

spiritual oversight to the members of this department as to the scholars in the regular school. The members are entitled to the use of the library and other Sabbath-school literature and to attend the picnics, entertainments, excursions and anniversaries of the school.

#### IV

##### *The Advantages of the Home Department.*

1. It is calculated to enlist all the families of the congregation in the Sabbath-school work.
2. It draws members into the Sabbath School proper.

The President of the International Home Department says: "The visitors constantly strive to interest students in the regular services of the Sabbath School, inviting them to attend the preaching and the regular school services, showing them the advantages of such study over independent, isolated work. As a result, about one-third of all the Home Class students unite with the main school."

3. It secures the coöperation of parents in the instruction of their children.
4. It brings the blessings and fellowship of the Sabbath School to those who are unable to attend.
5. It brings earnest Christian workers into personal contact with those who are neglecting the Word of God and their souls' salvation.
6. It wins to the Church some who are alienated from it.
7. It aids in the cultivation of systematic giving and increases the contributions to the Lord's work.

One pastor writes: "As to the Home Department,

the whole congregation, and especially all the teachers and officers in both the congregational and mission Sabbath Schools, have become enthusiastic supporters of it. . . . We have more than forty persons regularly studying the weekly Sabbath-school lessons and contributing to the Lord's work, outside of the congregation; and their contributions are quite as good, if not better, than those of our own members. So also their study of the lessons. Many of them are coming occasionally to church, and two or three who were thus originally interested have joined the church."

These two methods of Sabbath-school work, i. e., the Graded System and the Home Department, are comparatively new, and are not by any means general throughout our Church; but such testimony as the above will commend them to your consideration as candidates for the pastoral office.

## V

### *Precautionary Remarks on Introducing New Methods.*

1. Do not attempt new methods until you secure the coöperation of your leading workers.

The success of such methods as these cannot be assured in the face of determined opposition, or even indifference. It is a great gain if persons can be restrained from taking an attitude of antagonism, because it is so difficult to rejoice in the success of a scheme which has been carried on in despite of one's prediction of failure. It is easier to gain consent in advance than afterward. Of course a pastor cannot always permit his plans to be blocked by the unreasoning opposition of a few opinionated and unprogressive

men. "Be ye, therefore, wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

2. It may be better to confine the graded system at first to the children and young people.

Some of the aged people cannot memorize, and others of them are wedded to the old way and are made uncomfortable by new-fangled methods. It is better to leave them out at first and let them drift in, than to force them in at the outset and have them drop out.

3. Bear in mind that the brilliant success of any method in one congregation does not insure its success in every other.

Fields differ. Pastors differ. Workers differ. Circumstances differ. In forming plans of work you must follow the inductive method, i. e., make a full and complete collection of all the facts and deduce a theory that will embrace all the phenomena. Failure here will end in disappointment.

4. These methods require work and perseverance to make them successful.

No one can study the Graded System or the Home Department without perceiving that such methods demand unwearying, self-sacrificing toil. A certain well-worn Latin phrase concerning the price of excellence is nowhere more just than here. The ease-loving pastor need not attempt these methods. He will not succeed in them. But for the faithful persevering worker they have rewards.

And now, young gentlemen, this is all the time we can devote to the study of this department of the Church's activities. There is a demand that the theological seminaries shall furnish the *practical* instruction necessary to equip candidates for the pastoral office; much must be learned by doing, and this is especially true as to Sabbath-school work. I have done my best to cover the ground. I am well aware

that many important aspects of the work are still left untouched. For these I can only refer you to the books referred to in these lectures, especially, *The Modern Sunday School*, by Bishop John H. Vincent; *Teachers and Teaching*, by Dr. Trumbull; and *How to Conduct a Sunday School*, by Marion Lawrence; and to Murphy's *Pastoral Theology*.

As my last word to you on Sabbath Schools, I would charge you to regard as imperative the Saviour's command, "Feed my lambs." "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. . . . Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."

## LECTURE XIII

### YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES

AMONG the notable activities of the Church in the present day are the Young People's Societies, and the Church has been compelled to give attention to this modern development of religious activity. The movement is not one to be suppressed, much less is it to be left to take care of itself. It demands painstaking consideration and the utmost wisdom which the Church can command. Our own Church is behind most of the denominations in giving attention to it, and yet to no other Church is it of more vital importance. A few years ago the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church appointed a committee of eleven members, embracing some of the ablest ministers and laymen of the denomination, and they spent six full days in the effort to formulate a report defining the relation of Young People's Societies to the Church. All the leading denominations have grappled with the question. Our Church has not fully met her responsibility in this regard, and this department of her work lacks unity and force.

This subject follows naturally the subject of Sabbath Schools.

#### I

*Young People's Societies are of Different Kinds.*

1. Udenominational societies.

This class includes such societies as the Y. M.

C. A., the Y. W. C. A., the Y. W. C. T. U., the Legion of Honor, and such like. These societies are composed of young people gathered from the various denominations, and in some cases including those not members of any Church. They are organized for objects of a common Christianity. They all draw their strength and support from the Church of Christ, but have no organic connection with it, and are not in any sense under its authority and control. The Y. M. C. A. requires its active members to belong to some evangelical church. I have already, in another connection, endeavored to define the relation of a Covenanter minister to these organizations. If these undenominational societies are formed on the basis of an agreement to do work that is common to all denominations, in methods which all denominations approve, and in the use of forms of worship in which all the denominations agree, then identification and coöperation with them is not difficult. But to unite with them on a platform that is in violation of our own public profession and sworn covenant engagements is hurtful, both to common Christianity, and to our own Church.

I am fully persuaded that no form of undenominational society will satisfy the conscientious pastor as taking the place of the organization of his own young people under his own immediate supervision.

2. Interdenominational societies.

The most noted example of this class of young people's societies is the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor.

The advantages claimed for this form of organization are,—

- a. That it is superior to the undenominational society, because it is within the bosom of the Church. One of its rules is "that the pastor, deacons, elders, stewards and Sunday-

school superintendents shall be ex-officio members of the society." I think this claim of superiority over the undenominational society is justly made, and is of very great importance. It makes the society a development of Church life, and puts honor on the Church as a Divine institution. This is of great value.

- b. It also claims superiority over the denominational society as happily combining denominational and interdenominational features. It is insisted upon, as one of the principles of Christian Endeavor, that the Endeavorer must always be loyal to his own Church. This, it is said, guarantees the safety of the denomination. Then in the district and state unions and in the international conventions held under the auspices of the United Society of Christian Endeavor, the young people have the added advantage of the broader interdenominational fellowship. That this is a rightful claim is not so clear. To make good this claim it is necessary to show that the Christian Endeavor interdenominational fellowship is established on such a basis that the young people of all the Churches can enter into it in consistency with that first principle of Christian Endeavor,—namely, supreme loyalty to the distinctive principles and usages of their own Churches.

3. Denominational societies.

The denominational society differs from the undenominational in that instead of being independent of the Church it is identical with it. It is not only a form of Christian activity, but it is a method of Church service. It is the Church at work. It is in organic union with the Church as a body, and in vital union



with it as a life. It owes its allegiance to the Church alone, and is in subordination to the courts of the denomination to which it belongs. This is the form of organization adopted by a large majority of the leading denominations in the care of their youth. The United Presbyterian Church has its *Young People's Union*; the Methodist Episcopal Church has its *Epworth League*; the Baptists have *The Baptist Young People's Union*; the Lutherans have *The Luther League*; the Protestant Episcopal Church has *The Brotherhood of St. Andrew*, and the Canadian Presbyterian Church has *The Presbyterian Guild*.

4. Societies controlled by local sessions and presbyteries under general principles laid down by the supreme judicatory.

These are not strictly denominational societies, but are largely organized on denominational principles and subject to Church authority.

- A. The regulations adopted by the Presbyterian Church embrace the following:

- a. "That all the young people's religious organizations which are to be found within its Churches are under the jurisdiction of the Church.
- b. "That in general these societies are to be organized, and are to work in conformity with the historic position of the Church as expressed in her standards and interpreted by her courts.
- c. "The particular relations of all Presbyterian young people's societies to the Church are sustained in the first instance to the session of a particular Church and thence through the session to the Church at large.

"Each such society is under the immediate direction, control, and oversight of the session of that Church in which it is formed,

and that oversight is not merely general, but applies to—

- (1) "The constitution of the society, which the session must be careful to see is framed in accordance with the general principles named hereinbefore, and the received usages of the Presbyterian Church.
- (2) "The schedule of its services: including the time of meeting, the course of topics, and the general leadership, in order that such services may form an integral part of the work and worship of the Church.
- (3) "The election of its officers: to this extent that each society shall submit for the approval of the session the list of those whom it has chosen, lest unsuitable persons should be placed in positions of influence.
- (4) "The distribution of its funds: that the regular benevolent work of the Church under the care of Presbyterian Boards be not allowed to suffer through indiscriminate contributions to miscellaneous objects which appeal to individual sympathy."

It will be seen that the carrying out of these principles would make all the young people's societies of the Presbyterian Church strictly denominational. It leaves unsettled the question of how the interdenominational fellowship of these societies will be determined.

- B. The principles adopted by the Reformed Presbyterian Synod for the government of her young people's societies are found in Minutes of Synod, 1898, page 53, and also in the Minutes for 1901.

The report of a special committee in 1898 contains the following:

"Your committee are united in the belief that the denominational society is the ideal young people's society, and, if our young people were without organization, they would recommend the formation of such a society." This report was adopted by Synod.

The following recommendations were adopted:

1. "That the young people's societies in all our congregations are under the immediate control of the sessions.
2. "That it be left to the sessions to determine, in their wisdom, the name, form of organization, services, and relations of these societies.
3. "That sessions be held responsible to the presbyteries for the societies under their care.
4. "That presbyteries be recommended to seek to unite all the Covenanter young people within their bounds in a Covenanter Young People's Union, which shall embrace all the young people's societies in the congregations under their care; and shall also include the young people not connected with these societies, and those living in congregations where no local societies exist."

In 1901, Synod adopted the following:

1. "That we recognize as under the jurisdiction of the Church all young people's organizations that may exist within her bounds; that the Church through her courts owes to them maternal care and provision, and that to her spiritual authority they owe filial obedience in whatever she may advise or direct.
2. "That while Synod has allowed sessions to determine in their wisdom the name, form of organization, services, and relations of the individual societies, it is intended that these shall be in

harmony with the historic testimony and practice of the Church, as expressed in her standards and interpreted by her courts.

3. "That we remind our young people that in their work they represent the denomination of which they are a part, and that denominational loyalty consists in devotion to her principles and obedience to her authority.
4. "That while leaving to sessions the responsibility of controlling the interdenominational or undenominational fellowship of the young people's societies under their care, we recommend presbyteries to secure the organization of all societies of young people in Presbyterian Unions in loyal recognition of the primary authority and inclusive scope of the vows taken by our members when uniting with the Church; and we counsel all sessions and societies to guard against the corrupting influence of any and all false teaching and unscriptural practice: and especially against anything in the matter of praise contrary to the principles of our Church."

## II

### *Principles Which Should Govern the Organization of Young People's Societies.*

Having impartially stated the characteristics of each of these classes of young people's organizations, I submit to you the following propositions, which I think will commend themselves to your judgment:

1. The young people's societies should be organized within the Church.

The young people's society should not be what is termed a Voluntary Society, but a Church organiza-

tion. Connection with it may be voluntary in the same sense that connection with the Sabbath School is voluntary.

2. The young people's societies should be organized on denominational principles.

If the Church proposes to maintain her position as a distinct denomination, she must do it by the culture and training of her youth. As the Presbyterian Assembly has declared: "These societies are to be organized and to work in conformity with the historic position of the Church as expressed in her standards and interpreted by her courts."

The young people should feel that their engagements to duty in the society have their sanctions in something far more sacred and solemn than a mere social pledge; namely, in their sworn covenant engagements and their sacramental vows. Our Synod recognizes this principle when it recommends "presbyteries to secure the organization of all societies of young people in presbyterial unions in loyal recognition of the primary authority and inclusive scope of the vows taken by our members when uniting with the Church."

3. The basis of the interdenominational fellowship of the young people's societies should be determined by the authority of the churches to which the young people belong.

It is a great mistake to suppose that denominational young people's societies can have no interdenominational fellowship. The following proposition was submitted to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, namely:—

"That a committee be appointed to correspond with the representatives of the young people's organizations in the Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, United Presbyterian, Southern Presbyterian, and other Churches, with the purpose of ascertaining wherein an interdenominational fellowship among these young people can

be established and utilized for the promotion of those objects which we share in common with our sister Churches."

The Churches named here have all organized their young people on a denominational basis. This was a proposition to establish interdenominational fellowship among these denominational societies, under the auspices of their respective denominations. It is both reasonable and right that in so important a matter the Churches should have supervision of their own young people. It is a most serious defect in the interdenominational feature of Christian Endeavor that it establishes the fellowship of the young people of the Churches under the auspices and control of a legal corporation that is outside of all Churches; and that it excludes from this fellowship all denominational societies.

4. The interdenominational fellowship of the young people's societies should be regulated by the same principles by which the Church regulates her own interdenominational fellowship.

This principle has been illustrated repeatedly by the action of our Synod. In entering the Presbyterian Alliance she made it a condition that only what she recognizes as Scriptural forms of worship should be employed in the meetings of the Alliance. When she received an invitation for her young people to join in conventions where instrumental music would be used in the worship she respectfully declined in the following terms:

"In taking this action Synod begs to assure you that she is moved only by a sincere purpose to maintain consistently her testimony for purity of worship. This testimony has been transmitted to us by our covenanted fathers in Scotland and Ireland, and is the well-known historical position of our Church to which her practice has ever been conformed."

As long as the Church, in uniting with sister Churches in worship, makes it a condition that the worship in which they unite shall be Scriptural, the same principle should prevail when the young people's societies unite in services of worship. A session which would not arrange for a union service in which hymns and organs would be used, certainly should apply the same rule to the young people's organization.

5. Denominational fellowship should not be sacrificed for the sake of interdenominational.

There is something radically wrong with the interdenominational fellowship which runs a plowshare through the heart of the Churches and separates the societies of the same denomination. For instance, there are a great number of Westminster Leagues in the Presbyterian Church. As societies these are all excluded from fellowship with the Christian Endeavor Societies of their own Church, in district, county, and State unions. Frequent proposals have been made to organize local unions which would embrace all denominational societies in a town or community. This has always been resisted by those in control of the Christian Endeavor movement, as being detrimental to the interests of that organization. Such unions may have been formed, but they are not approved by the United Society.

These five principles seem to me to be self-evident, and their application imperative if the young people's movement is to prove a permanent blessing:

- I. *The young people's societies should be organized within the Church.*
- II. *They should be organized on denominational principles.*
- III. *The basis of interdenominational fellowship should be determined by the Churches to which they belong.*

- IV. *They should be governed by the principles which govern the Church, as a body, in her inter-church fellowship.*
- V. *Denominational fellowship should not be sacrificed for the sake of interdenominational.*



## LECTURE XIV

### THE PASTOR AND THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETY

THE young people's societies are here. Their advent generally has been regarded as one of the great spiritual movements of the age. Such has been their sway over the popular mind that he was a bold man who dared to call in question their right to be. This was the period when the Young People's Society was judged by its professions, what it claimed to be and to do. Now we have reached a period when it begins to be judged by its fruits. Whether the Young People's Society will remain as an approved form of Church-life and service depends upon the devotion of its members.

The fact that the advent of the young people's societies was followed by a marked decline in Church growth brought the arrest of thought. *Zion's Herald*, one of the ablest papers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, regards the influence of the society as unspiritual; and says it leads the minds of the young people away from Church connection, the very opposite of what was expected of it. "Whatever is the cause," it says, "there is a tendency to be satisfied and let the Church go."

One of our own ministers, a pastor of long experience, published an address delivered by him at one of our Presbyterial Christian Endeavor Conventions, in which he says: "There are dangers necessarily connected with all young people's societies. There is

not one today in which are not manifested hurtful tendencies. Those brethren would not be far wrong who oppose them in any and every form, were it not that they fail to take into consideration the fact that these societies are already in existence, and, by an inevitable law, will continue to multiply." (Dr. J. W. Sproull, in *Olive Trees*.)

If the Church comes to regard the society as only a necessary evil to which she submits because it is inevitable, she will find a way to rid herself of it. My experience as a pastor, however, taught me to look upon it in a more favorable light. Let us consider:

## I

### *The Advantages of a Young People's Society.*

#### 1. To the *pastor*.

- a. It brings the pastor into closer sympathy with the young people.

Many ministers find it difficult to establish proper relations with their young people. If they stand apart from them, surrounded by an atmosphere of ministerial dignity, they may win their respect, but not their love. If they mingle with them in their social gatherings and amusements as one of themselves, there is danger that the too great familiarity may breed contempt. The solution of the difficult problem lies in the young people's meeting, where the pastor mingles with the young people, as, indeed, one of themselves, and yet goes before them as their leader in a delightful, yet solemn religious experience.

- b. It promotes his acquaintance with their spiritual needs.

The pastor needs to know the needs of the flock. With the young people this is sometimes difficult.

They do not open their hearts to him. How can he come in contact with their souls? The Young People's Society furnishes the meeting ground. Their prayer-meeting usually is more of an experience meeting than the congregational prayer-meeting is. They cannot descant so learnedly on doctrinal subjects, and naturally turn to the practical side. They have fewer set phrases in prayer, and their petitions are more of an index to their hearts. The thoughtful pastor, mingling with them in these services, becomes acquainted with their inner life. Words let drop in the young people's meeting will often open the way for private interviews when the whole heart will be laid open to the pastor for counsel and help.

c. The pastor is supported by their prayers.

Some of the very sweetest hours in my pastoral experience were in the Sabbath evening meetings of my young people, when, weary and frequently discouraged with the labors of the day, I sat and listened to the gracious words that fell from their lips, and the fervent petitions in my behalf that rose from their tender and loving hearts. I would not willingly part with the memory of it. The pastor has an ample compensation for all the labor it imposes on him in the good it brings to himself.

2. The Young People's Society is a connecting link between the Sabbath School and the Church.

One of the greatest difficulties experienced in Sabbath-school work is to retain scholars when they pass out of childhood and young manhood and womanhood. At this point the young people's society renders valuable aid. It binds the youth of the Sabbath School to the Church by a threefold bond.

a. By a social tie.

The difficulty with many of our young people is, that they form social relations either with the unconverted and the irreligious or with those having moral

and religious standards lower than our own. By the powerful influence of the social nature they are drawn away from the Church. The best way to counteract this evil is to employ the social nature to bind them to the Church.

b. By a religious tie.

Man's religious nature is still more powerful than his social nature. If it is possible to weave the golden threads of religious experience into the web of life, so that it cannot be separated without a painful rending, then the Church will not lose her young people. A well-conducted Young People's Society will help to do this.

c. By a tie of practical work.

Multitudes drift away simply because they have no working interest in the Church. They are not ripe enough in knowledge or in Christian experience to be Sabbath-school teachers. They are not qualified to be deacons or elders. They find no use for their gifts. Having nothing to do they soon cease to care. The young people's society is a portion of the vineyard in which they can find some practical work. It will form another tie to bind them to the Church.

3. It is a means of regulating the Christian deportment of young people.

a. It guards the negative side of the Christian life by cultivating the positive side.

The Christian life is not one of repression, but of expression. "Walk in the spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." As to how to get rid of evil: "Learn to do well," and you will soon "cease to do evil." Cultivate the positive side, and the negative side will take care of itself.

b. It controls the conduct of young people by love of Christ, rather than by fear of discipline.

It is perhaps true that in former days the Church

depended too much on the fear of the session to restrain her young people from sinful and worldly amusements and appealed too little to their love of Christ. I would not be understood as urging the relaxing of Church discipline, but I plead for the cultivation of that which shall make discipline less necessary. I long for the day when young people will be kept from the dance, the pool-room, and the theater by their love of purity, rather than by the fear of the session. Too many young Christians are, like Simon the Cyrenian, "compelled to bear His cross."

4. It promotes Christian culture.

The Church is generally remiss in the care of new converts. Great effort is put forth to persuade them to come into the Church, but, once their names are on the roll, effort in their behalf ceases. That is the very point where it ought to be redoubled. The secret of many an apostasy can be found in the failure of the Church to follow up her work. The young people's society promotes Christian culture:

a. By the study of the Scriptures.

"As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (I Peter ii, 2.) "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." (Psalm cxix, 9.)

b. By experimental acquaintance with Christ.

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (II Peter iii, 18.) This is not knowing *about* Christ, but knowing *Him*. "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." (Philip. iii, 10.)

c. By frequent personal testimony.

Christ asked such questions as these: "Who touched me?" "What think ye of Christ?" "Whom say ye that I am?" "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou

me?" Such questions were not addressed merely to new converts, but also to those who had been with Him from the beginning. Why? Not for information, for He knew all things. It was partly, at least, to call forth the testimony of His disciples, that they might have their own faith made clear and strong by bold confession as to who He was and what He had done for them. To such service the young people's society invites.

5. It is a training school for Christian workers.

a. All Christians need work.

No matter how well instructed they may be, they cannot be strong Christians without something to do. Rich food without exercise is liable to produce dyspepsia. That there are not more spiritual dyspeptics among idle professors is due to the fact that many of them are fed on very light diet.

b. The Church needs workers.

Look at the uncultivated fields and the ungathered sheaves, and this just around the church doors. It is pitiful to see Christians dwindling and pining away for want of work, and souls perishing for want of workers.

c. The workers need training.

It is vain to expect men and women to take up, in mature years, work for which they have had no training in early life. It is the mission of the young people's society to raise up an army of trained soldiers, accustomed from their youth to use the weapons of spiritual warfare in fighting the battles of the Lord, and the implements of Christian husbandry in cultivating His vineyard, and the tools of Christian work in building the temple.

6. It promotes true denominational attachment.

This does not mean an empty pride in an ancestral name. It means devotion to divine institutions, to a system of God-given and blood-bought truth, and to

the accomplishment of a heaven-appointed mission. Such an attachment must be founded upon intellectual knowledge, conscientious convictions, and deep religious experience: and these the young people's society should supply. In personal experience as a pastor I found this true.

## II

### *The Duty of the Pastor to the Young People's Society.*

1. He should attend the meetings regularly.

a. For his own sake.

I have already spoken of the advantages to the pastor of the young people's society. To secure these he must be a regular attendant.

b. For the sake of the young people.

The presence of the pastor is important in order to maintain the proprieties of the meeting. A young people's meeting has its perils. It may be a very good thing, and it is possible for it to become a very bad thing. Satan's wolves delight to pounce upon the lambs of the flock when the shepherd is away. It will be difficult to secure regular attendance of the young people if the pastor is irregular.

c. Because an irregular attendance makes his presence embarrassing to the young people.

At first it is one of the trials of the young people to take part when the pastor is present. If he attends regularly the embarrassment passes away. But if they never know when to look for him, his coming in will put a damper on the meeting, and the young people will come to feel that the very poorest meetings they have are those when the pastor is there.

2. The pastor should enter heartily into the young people's plans.

- a. He should counsel with their committees.

It is common for these societies to carry on their work through various committees. Dr. Cuyler's society had a devotional committee to arrange prayer-meetings; a visiting committee to look after the sick; an entertainment committee to arrange music, readings, and other pleasant features for a monthly social; a temperance committee to oversee that branch of Christian labor; a relief committee for cases of poverty; and another to bring flowers for the pulpit every Sabbath and later send them to the rooms of the sick. In many societies the pastor is, *ex officio*, a member of all committees. All need his counsel and it should be given sympathetically.

- b. He should assist them in any proper special work.

If the young people act wisely, they will not undertake work without the pastor's counsel. It has been found beneficial for them to have a special work which they call their own. But it should not be independent of the control of the pastor and session. If their work needs financial support it is well for the pastor to give and to encourage others to aid them.

- c. Encourage their efforts to quicken themselves in duty.

There are differences of view as to the propriety of having a society pledge and a monthly consecration service. These are essential features of the Christian Endeavor Society. So far as I know, denominational societies make the taking of a special pledge optional. Dr. Cuyler, speaking of the terms of membership in his society, says: "It embraces three classes of members: active, associate, and honorary. Any member of our Church between the ages of fifteen and forty-five may be chosen an active member of the association; any person of good moral character may



become an associate member entitled to all privileges except that of holding office."

My own opinion is that this is the right basis of membership, and that a special pledge in addition to the Church Covenant should not be required; but every effort should be made to quicken members to a sense of the binding obligation of our Church vows. Many of our denominational societies have adopted the following paragraph from our Church Covenant of 1871, viz:

"We take the moral law as dispensed by the mediator, Christ, to be the rule of our life, and to be obeyed by us in all its precepts and prohibitions. Aiming to live for the glory of God as our chief end, we will in reliance upon God's grace, and feeling our inability to perform any spiritual duty in our own strength, diligently attend to searching the Scriptures, religious conversation, the duties of the closet, the household, the fellowship meeting and the sanctuary, and will seek in them to worship God in spirit and in truth. We do solemnly promise to depart from all iniquity, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world, commending and encouraging by our example: temperance, charity, and godliness."

d. He should exercise judicious restraint over the young people.

They will probably have plans which your judgment will not approve. Do not yield everything to their judgment. Guard against mere fault-finding, but persuade them to other things.

e. Preach sermons to the young people.

It is questionable whether more good than harm is done by the observance of Young People's Day, Decision Day, Rally Day, and such special occasions, but a sermon especially for the young people may be very helpful.

## IV

*Dangers to be Avoided in Connection with Young People's Societies.*

## 1. The danger of separating the people into classes.

One of the most reasonable objections made to young people's societies is that they tend to put asunder what God has joined together, namely, the old and the young. The young, it is said, need the old; and certainly we who are old need the young. This separation would be an evil indeed, but it does not necessarily follow. These two classes should not be permitted to drift apart. Encourage the older people occasionally to drop into the young people's meeting. Keep the young people constantly in the congregational prayer-meeting. Teach them that if they can attend only one prayer-meeting in the week, it should be the prayer-meeting of the congregation, and not the young people's meeting.

## 2. Avoid the cultivation of a self-sufficient or self-satisfied spirit.

There are forms of evil which have a tendency to creep into young people's societies. They are little foxes that spoil the vines, and our vines have tender grapes. The very fact of putting forward very young children to lead the meetings, or calling upon them to testify as to their religious experience, has its perils.

## 3. Guard against irreverence in the religious services.

Irreverence in worship is a sad blight upon Protestant Churches. It is necessary for the pastor to hold the reins with a firm hand in this matter. Young people who are not intentionally wicked are often very thoughtless, and shamefully irreverent in the house of God.

The leaders in large conventions of young people

are not always sufficiently careful to preserve the spirit of reverent worship. A recent report of one such gathering told that the leader of the choir called upon all who were over thirty years of age to sing one verse of the hymn; and all under thirty to sing the succeeding verse. The worshipers sang with an amused smile playing over their faces as they glanced from side to side to mark the effect upon those of uncertain age. Could anything be more unbecoming than that in the worship of God?

4. Guard against trifling with sacred things in the use of the pledge and the consecration meeting.

If it is decided to introduce these sacred ceremonies, then I charge you that as pastors you must hold yourselves responsible for their employment in the most solemn and impressive way. I can hardly conceive of anything more calculated to bring upon young souls the blight of spiritual decline than a monthly renewal of promises to God, followed by their habitual violation.

5. Guard them against the violation of their profession in the interdenominational gatherings.

There seems to be a difference of opinion as to the consistency of Covenanter young people becoming members of organizations whose forms of worship are in violation of the Scriptural law of worship and contrary to the doctrines and usages of our Church. That it is fraught with danger no one need deny.

In closing this subject I wish to express my profound conviction that, if our Church is to live to honor, her pastors must guard more carefully the young people's associations. May God make you wise and safe leaders of the youth who will soon be entrusted to your care. "That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, carved after the similitude of a palace."

## LECTURE XV

### THE PASTOR AND THE MISSIONARY SOCIETIES

OF organizing societies there seems to be no end. A society having as its special object to kill off all the other organizations, is about all that is left to be organized. The Woman's Missionary Society, however, was one of the first in the field and it should be spared to the last.

Murphy in his *Pastoral Theology*, says:

"Explain the matter as we may, the fact cannot be mistaken that, with woman is ever to be found the greater part of the piety, the earnest devotion, and the zeal of the Church. This is plainly to be seen in all of our churches. Among all denominations the evidences of it are to be found in the rolls of the membership; in the attendance upon all the services of the sanctuary; in her sympathy with every true object of benevolence; in her readiness to engage in every good work; and in her consistency of life. Upon this element of piety in his Church the pastor must ever place great reliance, and his wisdom will be manifested in so framing his plans of activity that it can be used to the greatest advantage. It is a power for good too important and peculiar not to receive his special attention."

#### I

#### *The Various Missionary Organizations.*

##### 1. The Woman's Missionary Society.

The name of the society indicates its membership

and the purposes of the organization. It is of long standing in the Church and has a place in nearly all of our congregations. The earlier name for it was The Female Missionary Society. Then it was more dependent on the pastor than it is now. It was thought that the society could hardly be opened with prayer unless the pastor or some prominent male member of the congregation were present. These societies are usually organized under a constitution, with by-laws, and the young pastor will generally find the missionary society in full running operation when he enters the field. If he does not, he should inaugurate the movement by consultation with the leading women of the congregation. It is easy to frame a constitution or to secure a copy from another society.

## 2. The Young Women's Missionary Society.

It is not best to multiply societies unnecessarily; one good strong society is better than two feeble ones; but, in large congregations, it has been found desirable to have a separate society for the young women.

- a. It frequently suits the young women better to meet at a different hour.
- b. They may be interested in different lines of work.
- c. It tends more to the development of their gifts.

If old and young meet together, the tendency is for the meeting to fall into the hands of the older members. The propriety of having a young women's society depends very largely on the circumstances, and the pastor should exercise a careful judgment and give his advice.

## 3. The Children's Mission Band.

This name is usually given to the organization of the children. Some doubt the propriety of such organizations, but experience seems to justify them.

- a. They should be under the supervision of one

of the women or young women of the congregation.

- b. A special effort should be made to interest mission scholars in the mission band.

4. The Band of Hope.

This is a form of organization similar to the Mission Band, except that its special object is temperance instruction. The Loyal Temperance Legion has largely supplanted this organization, and one or the other will likely claim some of your children. Wherever children's organizations are formed, the pastor should recognize that they have a special claim upon him. At no point can he make his work more effective than in dealing with the mind of childhood.

5. The Boys' Brigade and the Boy Scout Movement.

Much was formerly made of the Boys' Brigade, an organization for boys, largely wind and water, with absolutely nothing to commend it. The Boy Scout Movement is of the same type, but has the grace to keep itself clear of the Church. Such organizations are condemned by one and the same test: They are out of harmony with the spirit and aim of Him who is the Prince of Peace.

6. The Men's Missionary Society, and the Business Men's League.

It is one of the unmistakable signs of the progress of the Kingdom that in every well organized congregation we now have Men's Clubs. In the country congregation of a generation ago, the question was how to break up the horse-shed class. Later, during the years of my pastorate, I frequently heard it asked why we could not have missionary organizations of men as well as of women, and there seemed to be no reason except that the women managed their affairs better without the men. In fact they still originate and carry out plans which the men are staggered to

think of. But gradually the men of the church have been awakened to their opportunities; there are business men's leagues for "financiering the kingdom"; men's auxiliary missionary societies; civic leagues; law and order societies; and in fact every proposed reform now has a solid organization among the men of the Church. Among our own people the working congregations are organizing the men, and many of you will find, as young pastors, a strong working force in these organizations. Here lies your opportunity.

The pastor should consider that his pastoral oversight extends to all forms of organization in the congregation. Nothing is beyond his responsibility or beneath his notice.

## II

### *The Uses of the Missionary Society.*

What is said on this point will have special reference to the Woman's Missionary Society and can be applied to the others according to their circumstances.

#### I. It is an organization for prayer.

Formerly this occupied but a small place in the "Female Missionary Society," for there were but few women who would consent to lead in public prayer. Now the missionary society is, first of all, a woman's prayer-meeting. Speaking of the importance of this, Murphy says: "The influence of such a stated meeting of devout women for prayer and spiritual conference will most undoubtedly tell upon the piety and progress of the Church. . . . Unseen, and perhaps unnoticed, may be those little assemblies, but not unfelt will be their blessed results." They will tell upon the preaching and upon the Sabbath School, upon the cause of missions, and upon the bringing in of revivals of religion.

2. As a pastor's aid society.

Many congregations have organizations with this object and called by this name, but this is really a department of missionary society work. The work would be such as the following:

- a. Visiting new families coming into the bounds of the congregation.
- b. Seeking out those without a Church home.
- c. Reclaiming the disaffected and the negligent.
- d. Bringing scholars into the Sabbath School.
- e. Promoting peace and sociability in the church.

Murphy says: "Women have the piety, they have the feeling, they have the tact, they more generally have the time to do such work; and hence they do it more efficiently than men. There are some parts of Church work they can do better than even the pastor. They can reach families, especially the female portion of them, as the other sex cannot. They can follow up impressions that are made, cultivate the acquaintance of strangers, and persevere in efforts to interest them in the Church and her ordinances as men cannot or will not."

3. As a benevolent society.

Dorcas gave her name to this department of woman's work, and Dorcas Societies have long been known in the Church. But this, again, is only a department of missionary society work.

- a. Making garments for the poor.
- b. Clothing children for the Sabbath School.
- c. Sending missionary boxes to the various mission fields.

Such has been a most important branch of missionary society effort. This is applied christianity, and some who have not been able to contribute large sums of money to the mission cause have given in time and skill what has been of very great value.



## 4. In the care and keeping of the church building.

Perhaps a majority of the churches in our body have been furnished with carpets and with pulpit furniture, and some even with pews, by the missionary society; and you will find as pastors that it frequently happens that, when men cannot be moved to clean and paint and fresco the church, the women will come to your assistance through the missionary society.

## 5. As a direct missionary agent in the congregation.

## a. In cultivating the missionary spirit.

The missionary societies secure missionary sermons and lectures, keep up correspondence with mission fields, hold farewell meetings for missionaries going out and meetings of welcome to missionaries returning home. No one but Jesus knows what these noble women have done to fire the Church with missionary zeal, and to comfort the heart of His servants, the missionaries; but the missionaries testify somewhat to the value of their works of faith and labors of love.

## b. In employing city missionaries.

In many of our city congregations it is the Woman's Missionary Society that originates and sustains the city mission. It may be said that, after all, the men have to provide the means. That is only partially true; and, even so, it is the women that supply the spirit, and courage, and heart.

## c. By organizing the sewing school.

A very common branch of this local missionary effort is the organizing of schools for the training of girls to sew. It calls for consecrated womanhood to carry on this toilsome, and sometimes thankless, work.

## d. By combining the mother's meeting, the sewing circle, the gospel service and charity.

There is a plan of missionary work carried on by the women of the Second New York congregation which I wish to bring to your attention. It is this:

The women of the missionary society provide large quantities of materials for the manufacture of clothing. They invite poor women in the neighborhood of the church, or connected with the children of the Sabbath School, to meet in the sewing room in the church, and there they meet with them and cut out useful garments for the families of such as can be present, and direct them in the making. While the sewing goes on, the women of the society mingle with those brought in, conversing as in a mother's meeting. If the pastor, or any other minister, comes in to talk with them, they stop work for ten or twenty minutes and listen to him. When the work is done, the poor women take the garments which they have made with them, and they carry away hearts comforted and helped by this Christian fellowship and sympathy. Such a method combines many elements of helpfulness.

6. Raising funds for the different schemes of the church.

An examination of the various treasurers' reports will show that women's missionary societies are doing a marvelous work in raising funds for the church. No good work appeals in vain to these devoted women.

### III

#### *The Duty of the Pastor to the Missionary Societies.*

1. He should not interfere obtrusively in their work.

The pastor may make himself a nuisance to the missionary societies by attending all their meetings and undertaking to shape all their plans. This is worse than to discourage by neglect.

2. He should visit them occasionally to encourage by his words.

A brief call once in a while to manifest interest and sympathy and to assure them of how much they aid him in his work will be appreciated.

3. He should promote the upbuilding of the society.
  - a. By encouraging members to join.
  - b. By remembering them in his public prayers.
  - c. By special sermons on their behalf.
  - d. By enforcing their claims for assistance upon the congregation.

It was the custom of our congregation to devote the collection of Sabbath evening after communion to the missionary society. It was a good plan.

4. He should consult with them in regard to plans of work.

This will be necessary if they are to fill the place of Pastor's Aid Society and Benevolent Society. He will often find among the godly women of his flock his safest and wisest counselors, his most loyal supporters and his most devoted workers.

5. He should respond cheerfully to their calls for assistance.

The busy pastor is apt to become impatient under frequent interruption of his studies. Cultivate the habit of doing cheerfully and not grudgingly. Remember Paul's words, "Help those women." (Philip. iv, 3.)



PART II  
THE PASTOR  
IN RELATION TO THE CHURCH  
COURTS



PART II

LECTURE XVI

THE PASTOR IN THE SESSION

THE general subject of the lectures in *Pastoral Theology* for this part of the seminary year will be THE PASTOR IN HIS RELATION TO THE CHURCH COURTS. The subject of to-day's lecture is THE PASTOR IN THE SESSION.

I

*The Pastor of the Congregation is, Ex Officio, the Moderator of the Session.*

- i. Because the office of the ministry is, in its nature, superior to the office of the eldership.

It is admitted that there is parity of ruling power vested in ministers and ruling elders. But there is not parity of office.

This is evident:

- a. Because the minister's ordination to office is by a higher court.

Ministers are ordained by presbytery, elders by session or presbytery.

- b. There is difference in the form of ordination.

The minister is ordained by the imposition of the hands of ministers only; ruling elders by the imposition of the hands of both ministers and elders.

The *Book of Discipline* makes this distinction

clear: "The power of ordering the whole work of ordination is in the whole presbytery. Every minister of the Word is to be ordained by the imposition of hands and prayer, with fasting, by those preaching presbyters to whom it doth belong." Again: "Preaching presbyters orderly associated either in cities or in neighboring villages are those to whom the imposition of hands doth appertain for those congregations within their bounds."—*Book of Discipline*, pp. 45; 46-4; 47-10; 52-8; 106-4, 5.

- c. They differ as to the court before which they can be brought for trial.

A minister cannot be placed on trial before a session, but an elder can be.

Dr. Hodge, in his *Church Polity*, says: "Where an elder is to be tried, he is arraigned before the session; but process against a gospel minister must always be entered before the presbytery. Why is this, but that a man is to be tried by his peers? If so, then the elders are not the peers of the minister; they are not officially his equals."—Hodge's *Church Polity*, p. 275; *U. P. Government and Discipline*, p. 600; Art. II, 1; Art. III, 1.

2. In vacant congregations, presbytery appoints a minister to moderate the session.

If a session had power to elect its own moderator and to choose one of the elders to the place instead of the pastor, then there could be no occasion for elders in a vacant congregation applying to presbytery to supply them with a moderator in order that they might constitute for business. *Book of Discipline*, page 122, Rule 6, says: "A certificate shall be deemed regular when signed by the moderator and clerk of session; or when signed by a majority of the elders, if a congregation be vacant, and there has been no opportunity to make an appointment in constituted session." This clearly implies that, where



there is no pastor, the elders have no power to constitute the session. The vacant congregation receives its moderator at the hands of the presbytery.

3. Presbyterian law recognizes the pastor as *ex officio* moderator of the session.

The *Form of Church Government of the Presbyterian Church* says: "The pastor of the congregation shall always be the moderator of the session, except when for prudential reasons it may appear advisable that some other minister should be invited to preside; in which case the pastor may, with the concurrence of the session, invite such other minister as they may see meet, belonging to the same presbytery, to preside in the case. The same expedient may be adopted in the case of the sickness or absence of the pastor."—*Presb. Form of Govt.*, Chap. IX, Sec. 3.

The Presbyterian Church has, in one or more instances, chosen a ruling elder to preside in its General Assembly; but it lays it down in express terms in its *Book of Government* that the pastor shall always be the moderator of the session, with an exception made in such terms as to strengthen the rule.

That this is regarded as *ex officio* is made more evident by a concrete case, as follows:

The Presbytery of Erie memorialized the assembly, presenting this question: "When a minister has accepted a call to a congregation, said call having been placed in his hands by the presbytery, is he, *ex officio*, moderator of the session of that congregation previous to his installation?"

Evidently the presbytery of Erie had no doubt as to his relation after his installation, and they supposed that it might even belong to him as pastor-elect, while awaiting installation.

The committee to which the question was referred recommended the following answer: "A pastor-elect is not moderator, *ex officio*, as he has no official

connection with that church, but he may become moderator (if he is a member of that presbytery under whose care the church is) by invitation of the session or by appointment of presbytery."

In adopting this recommendation, the general assembly decided that a pastor-elect is not, *ex officio*, moderator of the session, but a pastor installed is. See Moore's *Digest*, pp. 481-482.

The *Book of Government and Discipline of the United Presbyterian Church* is specific on this point.

It says: "The pastor of the congregation is the standing moderator of the session."—*U. P. Govt. and Discipline*, Chapter I, Art. V, Sec. 2.

This is sufficient to show that this is Presbyterian law, on well-established principles; and while it is not expressed in such explicit terms in our *Book of Government*, it is necessarily implied and has always been observed as common law.

When, therefore, in the good providence of God, you are inducted into the pastoral relation, you are to assume at once your position as moderator of its session. It would only be an element of weakness to submit your official position to the vote of the session when you had already received it from the hand of the presbytery.

## II

### *The Duties of the Pastor as Moderator of Session.*

#### 1. To convene the session.

If the session adjourns without fixing a time and place for meeting, it is the duty of the moderator to convene the court when necessary. "A session is not dissolved though it adjourns without determining on a future meeting. A meeting of the session is always in order at the call of the moderator, and this may

be made by public intimation or by notice sent to each member.”—*Book of Discipline*, pp. 99, 100.

No one except the moderator has power to issue a call for a meeting of session.

The law of the Presbyterian Church as to a quorum is, that “two elders, if there be as many in a congregation, shall be necessary to constitute a quorum.”—*Form of Govt.*, Chap. IX, Art. 2. This seems to imply that, however large the session may be, two elders and the pastor constitute a quorum; but, if there be only two elders, they must both be present; if there be but one elder in the congregation, he, with the pastor, will have power to transact business. The *United Presbyterian Book* provides that “in all ordinary cases, two elders with a minister, or three elders in the absence of a minister, shall be necessary to constitute a quorum.”—*Govt. and Discipline*, Chap. V, Art. I, Sec. 7.

## 2. To constitute the session.

Church courts act in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by His authority. When the hour arrives at which the session has been called to meet, the pastor, in the chair, rises promptly and announces that “the hour has come to constitute the session, and the members will come to order.” He then engages in prayer constituting the court, in substance as follows:

“Be present with us, O Lord, and bless us as a court of Thy house, when in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of the Church, we constitute ourselves into a juridical capacity as we hereby do.”

The exact formula of words is not essential, but it is important that the court shall be formally constituted in the name of Christ.

The court is also adjourned by a like form. This is sometimes done by an elder. So important is this

act of constituting and adjourning the court by prayer, that it must be noted in the minutes of every meeting that it was so done; and any failure to so record, subjects the minutes to criticism by the higher court as being "contrary to the law and order of the Church."

—*Book of Discipline*, p. 98.

The pastor's further duties as moderator are:

3. To state the business before the court.
4. To keep the members to the question.
5. To maintain order.
6. To decide points of order, but not questions of law.
7. If requested, to sum up the argument before taking a vote.
8. To vote on a call of the *ayes* and *noes*.
9. To give the casting vote when the *ayes* and *noes* are equal.

### III

#### *The Order of Business in Session.*

1. The calling of the roll by the clerk.
2. Devotional exercises.

Not all sessions hold devotional exercises regularly, but many do so, and with profit.

3. Unfinished business.

It is the duty of the clerk of session to have a report of the items of unfinished business ready to place in the hands of the moderator at the opening of the meeting. This he makes up from the records in his hands. The report on unfinished business will include: (a) Reports of all special committees previously appointed; (b) Special items referred to the standing committees; (c) Items of business left unfinished at former meetings. If business once instituted is passed over for one or two meetings, see that

the fact is noted in the records of each meeting, so that it may not be lost sight of.

4. New business.

This includes the reports of standing committees, and anything which these may bring forward for action. Any member of session is entitled to present new business. It is the special duty of the moderator to see that nothing requiring attention is overlooked. He should make a note of matters as they occur to him and bring them forward at a suitable opportunity.

5. Adjournment by motion and with prayer.

## IV

### *General Rules for the Guidance of the Moderator.*

1. He should recognize that each elder is equal to himself in ruling power.

The fact that the pastor is, *ex officio*, moderator of the session does not change the other important fact that he has no superiority in ruling power over the elders. It is very offensive to independent men if the moderator in any arbitrary way attempts to control the action of the court. Elders have their responsibility as rulers in the house of God and must be upheld in their rights.

2. If the moderator has settled convictions as to the decision which ought to be reached, he should use discretion to prevent elders from taking grounds against him.

It is often difficult even for good men to yield when once they have declared their position. The tact of a pastor is displayed in preventing them from getting into an attitude of antagonism toward himself or toward one another. Occasionally you find two members of session who are constitutionally op-

posed to each other. Whatever one proposes, the other instinctively opposes. In such cases, the pastor needs to have the skill that disposes. If the opposition is toward himself, he may control the combative members the way the wife manages her husband, i. e., by seeming to give up to him, while she gently leads him her way.

3. The pastor must not exceed his authority in opposing what he feels to be wrong, but yield to the decision of the majority.
4. If the case is one in which he cannot conscientiously yield, he may request them to ask advice from presbytery; or he may enter his protest against the action of session on the records. This brings it to the attention of presbytery in its review of the records.
5. There may be cases where fidelity will compel him to complain to presbytery of the action of his session.

Dr. Thomas Sproull gave the following advice: "When there is likely to be a difference of opinion in session, and the moderator's mind is made up, it is often best for him to give his view first and then call on the one most likely to agree with him, and then the next most favorable, thus shaping the course to harmony."

The strength of the Covenanter Church lies in her eldership, but it takes a wise pastor to direct that strength in a straight line.

## LECTURE XVII

### THE RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

HAVING spoken of the relation of the pastor to the session, and, in general, of duties which belong to him as moderator, it follows, naturally, to consider the several departments of sessional business in which the pastor is called upon to bear a leading part. First among these is the reception of members into the Church, and this will be the subject of to-day's lecture.

#### I

*The Different Classes of Applicants, and How Each Class is to be Received.*

- I. Members from sister congregations of our own Church are received by a motion to accept the certificate and place the name on the roll.
  - a. Certificates, to be regular, must have the signature of the moderator and clerk of the session issuing the same.

The regular form of certificate is found in the *Book of Discipline*, p. 134. It reads as follows:

"This certifies that A. B. has, till this date, been a member of the Reformed Presbyterian congregation of —; is in good standing in the Church, and free of all grounds of censure as far as is known to us; and is hereby dismissed at his (or her) own request, to be united with the congregation of —.

“Certified by order of session, this — day of —, 19—.

“Moderator, —. Clerk, —.”

When an applicant presents a certificate in this form, all that is necessary is that a motion be made to accept the certificate and place the name of the applicant on the roll of members of the congregation. It is not essential that the applicant be present.

b. If a length of time has elapsed since the issue of the certificate, inquiry should be made as to the cause of delay in presenting it.

c. A member from a sister congregation should not be received without a certificate.

This is a matter of good order and of respect due to the session from whose care the member comes.

d. If the certificate is not at hand, the party may be admitted to communion while awaiting the certificate.

In that case, he communes simply as a visitor from a sister congregation.

e. Circumstances may arise where an applicant whose certificate has been delayed should be admitted to membership with the understanding that the certificate will be secured.

In such case, the facts should be noted on the minutes; and, when the certificate is received, that fact should also be noted. Such a case may occur in organizing a new congregation.

f. If the certificate contains any exceptions to the good standing of the applicant, the session must investigate the case before admitting the candidate.—*Book of Discipline*, pp. 62—2; 63—6.

g. In all cases, the record should contain the full name of the applicant and of the congregation from which he comes.



- h. If the member received be the head of a family, it is well to record the names of all the minor children of the family who are not yet in full communion.

The reason for this is that God includes children with their parents in the Church covenant; and when the parents are received the children are also taken under the care of the session and should be enrolled, as connected with the flock. Their names cannot appear on the roll of communicants, but may very properly appear in the minutes of session.

- 2. Applicants from sister denominations are received by certificate and examination.—*Book of Discipline*, p. 62—2.

- a. The applicant should meet with the session.

In the case of members from our own Church, this is not essential (though desirable) if the certificate be regular; but in all other cases the candidate must appear before the session.

- b. The certificate of any evangelical denomination covers all the points of agreement between that denomination and our own.

- c. The examination of the applicant should cover all the points of difference.

For instance, an applicant from the Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod, would be examined on the position of political dissent and the use of instruments in the worship of God; a United Presbyterian, on dissent, instrumental music, and secret orders; a Presbyterian, on the same, and also on the use of uninspired songs in worship, and on open communion; a Methodist, in addition to all these, would be examined on Calvinistic doctrines and church government; and a Baptist on the mode of baptism also, and the right of infants to be baptized.

- d. An applicant from the Roman Catholic Church requires to be rebaptized.

Our Church recognizes the validity of the baptism of all evangelical churches, including those baptized by immersion, but rejects Romanism as an anti-Christian system, and denies the validity of its ordinances.

3. Applicants who are baptized members of any evangelical church are received into full communion on examination and profession of their faith.

Children of professing parents are born in the Church and are entitled to the initiatory rite of baptism. To speak of persons already baptized in our Church as "joining the Church" when they are received into full communion, is not strictly correct and is productive of error, because it leads such persons to regard themselves as free from all covenant obligations until they make a public profession. The truth is, that they are children of the covenant, and, if they refuse or neglect to make a public profession, they despise their birthright and become covenant-breakers.

N. B.—The record as to their reception should differ from that taken in from the world. It should state distinctly that they were baptized members of the Church, and were admitted into full communion on examination and profession of their faith.

4. Converts from the world are received on examination, and profession of faith, and by baptism.

This of course refers to those who have never been baptized in any evangelical Church. Valid baptism is not to be repeated.—*Book of Discipline*, page 52.

The examination of those received from the world is the same as that of children born in the Church, with the exception made in the *Book of Discipline*, page 63, which reads: "The measure of knowledge

necessary for admission depends, in some degree, on the capacity and opportunities of improvement which the applicant may possess; but no one should be admitted who is ignorant of the first principles of the system of grace, or holds any sentiments contrary to the declaration and testimony of this Church.”—*Book of Discipline*, p. 63—4.

This statement meets, and completely answers, the objection so often heard that our Church maintains such a high standard that it is impossible to bring in converts from the world. The session is not required to maintain a high standard of knowledge and to enforce a fixed rule as to attainments, regardless of the circumstances and opportunities of the applicant. The absolute requirements are simply two.

- (1) They shall admit no one “who is ignorant of the first principles of the system of grace.”
- (2) They shall admit no one “who holds any sentiments contrary to the declaration and testimony of this Church.”

Who would ask anything broader than that? How reasonable are such requirements!

5. May one be admitted to membership in our Church who does not fully endorse all the Church’s positions?

For reply to this question, see *Testimony*, Chapter xxii, Sec. 2, Error 6; *Book of Discipline*, p. 63, Sec. 4.

A study of these passages will reveal the following principles:

- a. The candidate should be sufficiently acquainted with the doctrines and usages of the Church to intelligently endorse them.

The *Book of Discipline* says: “Every one who is able to read and to understand the terms of communion and the documents to which they refer, must give evidence that he has diligently read and that he doth approve them.” The formal act of having read

the documents is not absolutely essential, provided the candidate is in possession of the necessary knowledge.

- b. A candidate should not be received into the Church, who, being acquainted with her position, is conscientiously opposed to any of her doctrines or usages.

The *Testimony* specifically condemns it as an error, "that any person may be admitted to communion who opposes any of the terms of Church fellowship." *Testimony*, Chap. xxii, Error 6.

This is manifestly right. Church vows are of the nature of a covenant with God, and no one can sincerely covenant with God on a basis which he regards as contrary to God's word.

- c. If a convert gives evidence of being a true believer, and an honest inquirer after the truth, the session should take into account his capacities and opportunities in deciding the question of his admission.

The *Book of Discipline* says: "The measure of knowledge necessary for admission depends, in some degree, on the capacity and opportunities of improvement which the applicant may possess."

- d. No one should be admitted to full communion in the Church who will not promise to conform his life to the teachings of the Church while making further diligent inquiry concerning their truth.

That any one should claim the privilege of violating his public profession of faith on the ground that he is in doubt as to its Scriptural warrant, is absurd. If he is in doubt, he must give the Church whose privileges he seeks to enjoy, the benefit of the doubt. He has no right to live in the practice of doubtful things while professing obedience to Christ.

## II

*How to Conduct the Examination of Candidates for Church Membership.*

1. Endeavor to set the candidates at ease.

Unless you have a vivid recollection of your own experience in appearing before session, you will hardly be able to appreciate the extreme diffidence, and even dread, experienced by persons, young and old, in appearing before the Church court for examination. It is well to introduce the service with kindly and assuring words calculated to secure presence of mind and the use of their faculties to the persons to be examined.

2. Make the examination simple, and on essential gospel truths.

It is an entire mistake to suppose that the object of the service is to measure the full capacity of the candidates. It is merely to determine whether they have sufficient attainments in knowledge and grace to make a credible profession.

3. Examine carefully on the distinctive principles of the Church.

It is important that the profession be made intelligently. A skillfully conducted examination will greatly assist those whose knowledge is imperfect. It is a great mistake to pass lightly over points on which the mind of the candidate is supposed to be hesitating. Let the moderator, if he formulate his questions in such a way as to instruct the candidate what his answers ought to be, see to it that his questions are not being answered without being understood; rather, he should let the questions be so clearly understood that a christian conscience cannot hesitate to answer correctly.

4. Deal tenderly and yet closely with them as to their religious experience and habits of life.

The instruction on this point in the *Book of Discipline* is exceedingly judicious. It says:

"Great prudence and delicacy are necessary in examination of an applicant's piety, as no man can ascertain whether another is really a believer; but the Church is a holy generation and cannot consistently admit any one evidently destitute of piety, or who professes to be unregenerate. Every member must give satisfactory evidence of his living in the practice of secret prayer and family religion; and must intelligently profess both respect for experimental godliness and acquiescence in the plan of salvation revealed in the Holy Scriptures."—*Book of Discipline*, p. 63.

Caution should be used in questioning persons as to their habits of secret prayer and reading of the Bible, not to tempt them to any prevarication. It would require great integrity and moral courage for a young person to confess his neglect of these duties in the presence of the session after other young persons had declared their observance of them; and especially if their admission to the Church was understood to depend on their answering in the affirmative. It is sometimes better to put it in another form, e. g., "Do you recognize the duty and the privilege of secret prayer and engage to attend diligently upon this means of grace daily, morning and evening?"

5. Make clear the duty of a complete and unreserved surrender to God.

One, in addressing young converts, said: "Get wholly into Christ; get WHOLLY in; you will find it hard to live a Christian life if you do not get WHOLLY IN." This truth should be emphasized at such a time. Do not permit applicants to rest in the fact that they are getting wholly into the Church without getting wholly into Christ.

6. Explain and impress the nature of covenant vows and obligations.

There is a fearful and alarming disregard of these in the Church. The apparent ease with which even ministers of the Gospel cast off their vows to the Church and to Christ is a sad commentary on this truth. An aged minister having been sent by presbytery to inquire into difficulties which had arisen in a certain congregation reported as follows: "I just found two things the matter with the people of that congregation: First, an utter disregard of their covenant obligations; second, a doleful lack of grace." It was a strong indictment. These two things are sure to go together.

7. Give the members of session an opportunity to advise and counsel the candidates.

This will come in appropriately on a motion to receive them into full communion, but guard against tedious and commonplace exhortations.

8. Close the service with a brief prayer and as moderator of the session, welcome the candidates with the right hand of fellowship.
9. A formal reception may be given in the presence of the congregation.
  - a. Have the candidates come forward.
  - b. Propose to them the terms of communion.
  - c. Close with a brief address and give them tokens of admission to the Lord's table.
10. Announce the names of new members to the congregation and commend them to the prayers and fellowship of the church.

An appropriate time is Saturday before the communion and should include all received since the previous communion. May the Lord, through the ministry of each of you, add to the Church daily such as shall be saved.

## LECTURE XVIII

### THE ELECTION OF OFFICERS

THE purpose of to-day's lecture is to give instruction in conducting the election of elders and deacons.

#### I

*What is the Province of the Session Preliminary to the Election of Officers?*

- I. To decide when there shall be an increase in the number of officers, and to determine the number to be chosen.
  - A. The people may petition the session for an election.
  - B. The board of deacons may request the session to provide for an increase of the board.
  - C. It belongs to the session to decide upon the necessity for an election.
  - D. In case a session persistently declines to arrange for an election, a petition may be presented to presbytery.—*Book of Discipline*, p. 103, Chap. VII, Sec. 1, and p. 104, Sec. 4.

It requires great prudence on the part of the session to determine when an election of officers is desirable or necessary. They should be careful not to thwart the right of the people to choose additional officers, and the people should move very cautiously in going over the heads of the session to secure their supposed right from presbytery.



2. To fix the time and give sufficient notice to the people.

A. Usually it is best to set the time not very far ahead.

The tendency is to put forward candidates and to engage in electioneering, if too much time elapses between the announcement and the election. Pastors generally prefer to have little discussion beforehand, and, for this reason, they make the time as short as is permissible. However, we should not err on the other extreme.

B. About ten days is a reasonable time.

The *Book of Discipline* specifies ten days' notice in case of the election of a pastor, and then says, as to the election of elders and deacons: "The same shall be publicly intimated to the congregation a sufficient time before the election takes place."—*Book of Discipline*, p. 103, Sec. 4. *The United Presbyterian Book* fixes the time at ten days.

C. Notice should be given from the pulpit, or in all the societies in case there is no public worship.

3. The session or any member of the congregation may propose the names of candidates to the people.—*Book of Discipline*, p. 101, 5; and 104, 6.

The *Book* provides that any member in regular standing may, on the day of the election of a pastor, propose a candidate, and this seems to be implied in the case of the election of other officers where it is said that "as far as applicable, the same rules shall apply to them."

*The United Presbyterian Book* says: "If the session has previously agreed upon suitable persons, it shall nominate them to the congregation; yet this shall not preclude the nomination of others by any member of the congregation."

It is very seldom that any of our sessions take the responsibility of naming candidates. When votes are widely scattered they may advise the people to concentrate on those receiving the highest vote. That is about as far as they can venture to influence an election. The pastor must be exceedingly careful not to interfere in any way with the freedom of choice.

## II

### *The Order of Exercises in Conducting an Election of Officers.*

1. The pastor should preach an appropriate sermon. The following themes will suggest others equally suitable:

- A. The Sacredness of the Church, her Institutions and Officers.
- B. The Qualifications of Church Officers.
- C. The Responsibility of Electors.
- D. The Need of Divine Guidance.
- E. The Glory of God the Supreme Motive.

Use every effort to drive out a spirit of levity or of acrimony and to quicken the spiritual natures of the people.

2. Constitute the session.

The election is held in constituted court. The whole procedure is under direction of the session. Questions may arise which require a judicial decision.

3. Appoint two persons of respectable character, not members of the congregation, to act as judges.—*Book of Discipline*, p. 101, Sec. 4.

The duties of the judges are:

A. Not to decide on the voters, but on the votes.

The session alone determines the qualifications of electors, and furnishes the list of those qualified to vote.

B. One judge reads the ballots; the other assists

the clerk of session in keeping the tally.—*Book of Discipline*, p. 101, 2, Sec. 10.

C. The judges count the votes and certify to the moderator how the vote stands.

4. Take the vote.

A. The roll of those entitled to vote is made up beforehand, and consists of all members in full communion.—*Book of Discipline*, p. 101, Sec. 8; p. 102, Sec. 10.

The rule is specific. The session should be careful to have the roll correct and complete. No one is to be permitted to vote who would not be admitted to the Lord's table; and no one to be excluded who would be allowed to commune, provided he is a member of the congregation.

B. Three ways are prescribed in which the vote may be taken.

a. By uplifted hands.

This method supposes the nomination of candidates and is seldom employed, except in cases where one who is already ordained is to be chosen for installation; or in other cases where the choice is a foregone conclusion and the election a mere formality. The principal argument in favor of this method is the quickness with which it can be done, and this has little weight when compared with the importance of the service.

b. By calling the names of the members.

This is better than the first method, but not so good as the third, which is,

c. By ballot.

The advantages of this method are—

- (1) It gives dignity to the service.
- (2) It avoids unnecessary wounding of the feelings.
- (3) By its secrecy, it gives greater freedom to the electors.

## C. How to conduct the ballot.

- a. Name one or two tellers for each aisle of the church to collect the ballots.
- b. Let the clerk of session call the roll as previously prepared.
- c. Instruct the voters how many names are to be placed on the ballot.
- d. As each voter's name is called, let the member rise and answer "here"; and the teller nearest, present the ballot box; then, as the ballot is deposited, announce distinctly the word, "vote," when the clerk of session checks off the name, and the judges tally the vote.

## D. Proxy votes.

- a. The party sending a proxy vote should prepare it himself.

It is not proper that a member of the family in attendance, or any other, should prepare proxy votes for absent members, even if morally certain how the absent one would vote if present.

- b. Proxy votes should be sent in sealed envelopes.
- c. The name of the voter is not to be signed to the ballot, but to be written on the outside of the envelope.

The object of this is to identify the voter and yet preserve the secrecy of the ballot.

- d. The envelope should be addressed to the session.
- e. When the name is called, the person having the proxy in charge places it in the hand of the moderator, who takes it from its envelope and, without reading the ballot, drops it into the ballot box, announcing "proxy vote." The judges tally it on a separate list as a proxy vote.

- f. Proxy votes can be counted only on the first ballot.—*Book of Discipline*, p. 110, Sec. 10.

5. Count the ballots.

- A. Count the ballots in the box to see that the number corresponds to the tally sheet.
- B. One of the judges reads the ballots aloud in the hearing of the electors.
- C. The other judge and the clerk of session record the vote.—*Book of Discipline*, p. 101, Sec. 10.

6. Announce the result.

A majority ballot is necessary to a choice. The usual method of announcing is—

- A. The whole number of ballots cast.
- B. The number necessary to a choice.
- C. The number received by each candidate.
- D. The names of those elected.

For example—

- a. The whole number of ballots cast for three members, 100; making 300 votes.
  - b. Necessary to a choice, 51, i. e., one more than half the ballot.
  - c. John Doe received 90 out of the 300; Richard Roe 85; John Smith 49; the rest scattering; or you may read the number to each one in the list.
  - d. John Doe and Richard Roe, each having received a majority of the ballot are duly elected. If no one candidate receives a vote on a majority of the voting slips, the announcement will be: "No candidate having received a majority, there is no election."
7. In case there is no election, the session determines whether there shall be a second ballot.
8. Fix a time for the examination of the candi-

dates-elect, and, if there is no further business, adjourn.

It is not usually wise to question the candidates as to their acceptance just at that time.

### III

#### *Contingencies Which May Arise in Connection with an Election of Officers.*

1. It may be prudent for session, after the first ballot, to reconsider their action fixing the number to be elected: either,
  - A. To stop with the number elected on the first ballot; or,
  - B. To increase the number so as to include those whose votes are then equal or nearly so.
2. It may be necessary to adjourn the election to another time.

In such cases, there must be no ground for the suspicion that the session, foreseeing that further balloting would result in the election of some one undesirable to them, resorted to this measure in order to defeat the will of the people.

3. The persons chosen may at once decline to serve.

Usually it is not best to accept their declinature at that time; because (a) they have not sufficiently considered the matter; (b) it may be difficult to secure others.

### IV

#### *A Word of Caution.*

Presbyterian government is popular government. See that the *will of the people* is not defeated. To this end, make sure that they understand the method of voting, and make every effort to have a full vote.

## LECTURE XIX

### THE ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

THE setting apart of men to office in the Church of Christ is a service of peculiar solemnity, and the pastor should prepare for it with great care, and conduct the services with gravity and decorum.

#### I

*Note the Distinction Between Ordination and Installation.*

1. Ordination is that ceremony by which the persons duly elected are inducted into office. Installation is the act by which the relation is constituted between the officer and the congregation. The first clothes the man with office; the second qualifies him to exercise his office in a particular field.
2. Ordination of an officer is never repeated, for ordination is not made void by the dissolution of the relation constituted by installation. An ordained officer, when called to office in a new field, is not re-ordained, but is installed anew.
3. An installation is conducted the same as ordination and installation, with the exception of the act of ordination itself.—*Book of Discipline*, p. 107, Secs. 7, 8.

## II

*Exercises Preliminary to Ordination.*

## 1. The examination of the candidates.

## (1) This is done in constituted session.

In a recent case, the review of sessional records brought out the fact that the moderator of the session had examined the candidate at his home, and reported to session, and that the examination was approved. The presbytery condemned this course as being "contrary to the law and order of the Church."

The *Book of Discipline*, p. 104, Sec. 5, says: "A time is then fixed by the session for the examination of the candidates." This clearly implies that the session will conduct the examination.

The form of the edict reads: "Messrs. A., B., etc., having been chosen to the office of ruling elder by this congregation, and being examined by session and judged qualified to take the office," etc.—*Book of Discipline*, p. 133.

Furthermore, the law for the reception of members is specific: "The minister shall examine in the presence and with the help of the elders of the church in a constituted session, all applicants for admission to the church."—*Book of Discipline*, p. 63, Sec. 3. No one will say that the examination for officers should be less formal and authoritative than the examination for membership.

The United Presbyterian law is specific: "Before the ordination of ruling elders and deacons, the session shall meet to examine the persons elect as to their acceptance of the office, their views in undertaking it, and their qualifications for it."—*Book of Govt.*, Chap. VII, Art. 2, Sec. 1.

## (2) What should the examination include?

## a. Their knowledge of the doctrines of grace.



This is necessary, especially in the case of the elders. Their duties include the instruction of the youth, family visitation, the visitation of the sick, the examination of applicants for membership: all of which require acquaintance with the truths of Revelation.

- b. Their soundness in the faith and practices of the Church.

It is highly important that office-bearers not only should know, but that they should conscientiously believe, the doctrines of the Church, and approve of all its practices. It is a great misfortune to a congregation to have officers who are half-hearted in their profession. It is like having disloyal commanders in an army. It is likely to result in a betrayal of the cause. The examination should, therefore, cover all the distinctive principles of the Church.

- c. Their Christian character and deportment.

The officers are to be ensamples to the flock; and they stand before the world as chosen representatives of Christianity. They ought to be like John the Baptist, who was "a burning and a shining light"; *burning* with zeal, and *shining* with purity.

Under this point comes the question which Synod has directed to be asked of all candidates for office in the Church: i. e., Do you use tobacco? Sometimes the objection is made that until this is made a term of communion it should not be made a condition of office. But the objection is not well founded. The New Testament lays down a special standard for office-bearers in the Church.

- d. Their acquaintance with, and qualifications for, the office to which they are to be ordained.

It is possible for one to be an intelligent Christian and living an exemplary life and yet be deficient in qualities necessary to official trust. It would be a

delicate matter to refuse ordination to one whom the people had chosen, on the ground that he lacked fitness for the office. The examination, however, furnishes an opportunity for imparting instruction as to the duties of the office, and this should not be overlooked in the examination. If it does nothing more than to reveal to the candidate his need for greater endowments, and for a careful study of the nature of the office which he is about to undertake, it will have done much.

2. Fix a time and place for hearing objections.

The session, having examined the candidates and judged them qualified, is then to give opportunity to the people to bring forward any reason known to them, why the ordination should not take place. With such exceeding care has the Church guarded the rights of the people as to their rulers.

A. The weight to be attached to objections will be determined—

- a. By the character and standing of the objectors.
- b. By the nature of the objections.
- c. By the manifest, or probable, motives in presenting them.

B. It may be prudent for a candidate to give way to the opposition, even where he does not admit its justice.

3. Direct the edict to be read.

The form of the edict is found in the *Book of Discipline*, p. 133. It is the same for elder and deacon, except the name of the office. It is well to write it out, filling the blank for the names, so as to use the exact phraseology. The edict is to be read for two Sabbaths before the ordination.—*Book of Discipline*, p. 105.

## III

*The Order of Exercises in the Ordination Services.*

1. Convene and constitute the session.
2. Read the edict.

This is the opening act of the ordination service. The rule is specific. "And on the day of ordination immediately before the services commence, the edict shall be read. This is done by order of the court which meets and constitutes in some convenient place shortly before the services are to commence. An edict shall be served in the same manner before the ordination, or admission, of ruling elders and deacons."—*Book of Discipline*, pp. 105, 106.

This requirement to convene and constitute the session beforehand is not always observed; and, where the preliminaries have been regularly attended to, it may not be necessary. In reading the edict for the last time, change the last sentence to read, "Which is now constituted."

3. Preach the ordination sermon.

This should be appropriate to the occasion and should not exceed thirty minutes in length. Suitable subjects are: The Church: Her Organization and Laws; The Duties and Responsibilities of Church Officers; The Grace and Support Promised; The Steward's Accountability to God; Watching for Souls.

4. Call the court to order and invite the candidates forward.

It is very important to explain to the candidates beforehand what they will be expected to do. Make clear to them the several steps, even to the minutest particulars.

5. Give a brief narrative of the previous steps.

Write this out so that you can say the exact thing.

This narrative will relate that at its meeting on such a date the session resolved upon an increase of officers; that such a time was fixed for the election; that due notice was given to the congregation; that the election was regularly conducted according to the prescribed order; that the persons now before the congregation were duly elected; that they have already been examined by the session and judged qualified to undertake the office to which they stand elected; that the edict has been properly served on three several occasions, and that no objections having been made (or sustained) the session has now resolved to go forward with the ordination.

6. Propose the prescribed queries in *Book of Discipline*, pp. 117-119. *Testimony*, pp. 251, 252.

7. Take the engagements of the parties.

Question the candidates as to their willingness to undertake the office in this congregation and the congregation as to their acceptance of these as officers.

In ordaining ministers, the *Form of Church Government* provides that: "After the sermon, the minister who hath preached shall in the face of the congregation demand of him who is now to be ordained . . ." Here follow his engagements. Again: "In all which, having declared himself, professed his willingness, and promised his endeavors by the help of God, the minister likewise shall demand of the people concerning their willingness to receive and acknowledge him as the minister of Christ, and to obey and submit unto him, as having rule over them in the Lord, and to maintain, encourage, and assist him in all the parts of his office."—*Book of Discipline*, p. 52, Secs. 6, 7.

It is evident that the design of this part of the service is to take the mutual engagements of the parties to each other. It is not taking a vote whether they will or will not, which would be equivalent to a

reëlection; it is simply taking their engagement that they will. It is like the engagement of parents in receiving baptism for their children, or the vows of husband and wife in entering into the marriage relation. The queries are to be audibly answered in the hearing of the congregation.

It is customary to carry out the same idea in the ordination and installation of elders and deacons. See *United Presbyterian Govt. and Disc.*, Chap. VII, Art. II, Secs. 8, 9, 10, and *Presbyterian Book of Govt.*, Chap. XIII, Secs. 4, 5.

N. B. In some copies of the *Book of Discipline* there is an error in Query 5, p. 118, where the phrase, "And *from* the unity of the Christian Church," is made to read: "And *form* the unity of the Christian Church."

8. The candidates kneel for the ordination prayer.

The arrangements for this should be carefully made, and in such a way that there shall be no difficulty presented to the members of the court in performing the ceremony of the imposition of hands.

One who has been ordained does not kneel for installation.

9. The ordination prayer.

The pattern for this is given in *Book of Discipline*, p. 53. Prepare carefully for this prayer, noting two things:

- (1) The act is performed in the name of Christ.
- (2) There is a proper moment for the imposition of hands.

It is not necessary that the hands should remain upon the heads of the candidates until the close of the prayer.

10. The members of the court extend the right hand of fellowship both to elders and to deacons.

11. Address to the officers.

12. Address to the congregation.

These addresses should be admonitory, encouraging, and affectionate. Do not mar the occasion by rebukes and severity for past remissness on the part of the old officers. Strive to make the service uplifting to the soul and pleasant to the memory.

13. The officers sign the terms of communion, and, if elders, take their places at once as members of the court.

Do all things in order.

## LECTURE XX

### THE EXERCISE OF DISCIPLINE

THE parable of *The Tares and the Wheat* is frequently quoted as opposed to the exercise of discipline in the Church. Does not our Lord say: "Let both grow together until the harvest; lest, while ye pull up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them?"

Fortunately our Lord expounded the parable. "The field is the world," He says. It will not do, in the face of His declaration, to say, "The field is the Church." And if the field is the world, and the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels, then the parable is not spoken with reference to the exercise of Church discipline, but refers to God's providential government of the world.

"Discipline is the exercise of that authority with which the Lord Jesus Christ has clothed the officers of His Church, to deal with offenders according to the laws which He has given in His word."—*United Presbyterian Book of Govt. and Disc.*, Chap. I, Part III.

Murphy says: "This is, of all duties devolving upon pastor and session, the most difficult and unpleasant; and yet it cannot be ignored without bringing the Church into contempt, and seriously injuring the cause. The purity of the Church, the honor of the cause of God, the value of the privileges of membership, the good of offenders, even the existence of an organized body of believers, demand that it shall be sometimes exercised."

It is therefore important that painstaking instruction be given to candidates for the pastoral office in regard to this difficult and yet necessary department of their work. I am happy to confess to you, young men, that I have less experience in this line of pastoral duty than in any other of which I have spoken to you in this course of lectures.

Let us consider:

## I

### *The Objects of Church Discipline.*

1. To vindicate the honor and authority of Jesus Christ.

Ezek. xxii, 26. (R. V.)—"Her priests have done violence to my law, and have profaned my holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and the common; neither have they caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean; and have hid their eyes from my Sabbaths; and I am profaned among them."

Ezek. xliv, 6-8. (R. V.)—"And thou shalt say to the rebellious, even to the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God: O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations, in that ye have brought in aliens, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to profane it, even my house when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant to add unto all their abominations."

The passages show how Christ is wounded in the house of His friends when the most sacred mysteries of His holy religion are thrown open to the profane and to the unclean.

2. To maintain the truth:

The Church is "the pillar and ground of the truth."



The Church at Ephesus received high commendation from her Lord for her fidelity in the exercise of discipline for the maintenance of doctrine. Rev. ii, 1, 2—"Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks: I know thy works and thy toil and thy patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men; and didst try them which call themselves Apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false."

On the other hand the Church at Pergamos is severely rebuked for the lack of discipline for false teaching. Rev. ii, 14. (R. V.)—"I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner."

All trials for heresy are for the defense of truth. Rom. xvi, 17: "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

3. To preserve the ordinances in their purity.

Rev. xi, 1, 2: "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod; and the angel said, Rise, and measure the temple, and the altar, and them that worship therein." The angel who gave this instruction is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Angel of the Covenant. He is the only King and Head of Zion, and He here directs that the standard of the word of God shall be applied to His church in her constitution and government, her worship and the character of her worshippers. This is the use of the discipline of the Church to preserve the purity of her ordinances.

4. To exclude the unholy from sealing ordinances.

Ezek. xliii, 10-12: "Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof, and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them. This is the law of the house. Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house."

This passage is applied to the service known as *debarring*, or "fencing the tables"; but it is also a warrant for the exercise of discipline to restrain the unholy and profane from approaching the holy sacrament impenitently.

5. To reclaim offenders.

I Cor. v, 4, 5: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ: To deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Here the ends of discipline, so far as the offender is concerned, are clearly stated. It is for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved. It is an exceedingly difficult thing in these days to convince the subjects of Church discipline that they are being dealt with for their own good. Experience has proved the efficiency of this means of grace. Men can be made both moral and religious by law.

6. To deter others from sin.

I Tim. v, 20: "Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may be in fear." Deut. xiii, 11:

“And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness among you.” See *Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 4.

## II

### *The Spirit in Which Discipline is to be Exercised.*

One of the most important, as well as the most difficult, of things, is for the pastor to keep himself and the session in the right frame of mind. So many things occur to arouse wrong feelings and to warp the judgment.

The proper exercise of discipline demands:

#### 1. The spirit of *prayerfulness*.

When Samuel was sent to reprove Saul, we are told that “he cried all night unto God.” That is the kind of preparation the pastor needs when entering upon a case of discipline. Dr. Wilcox, in *The Pastor and His Flock*, says: “Never let the process of discipline degenerate into a cold, technical trial of charges. Commence every session held in the course of it with earnest prayer. Suffuse the whole with a devout and tender spirit.”

#### 2. The spirit of *humility*.

The very fact that there is a call for the exercise of discipline should humble the pastor. A member of his flock is out of the way. Is it through his own remissness in teaching or warning or guiding his people? The fact that we are clothed with authority over the lives of others is used by the adversary to foster pride, and nothing could be more detrimental to the good results of discipline than any display of this spirit before those who are the subjects of discipline. Gal. vi, 1: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.”

3. The spirit of *wisdom*.

It requires discretion to determine when a process of discipline is absolutely necessary. We may err either in being too hasty or in being too reluctant in taking up a case. And not only *when*, but *how*? The sad consequences which may result from our blundering may well evoke the cry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" James i, 5: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James iii, 17: "But the wisdom that is from above is *first* pure, *then* peaceable; gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

4. The spirit of *firmness*.

All exercise of authority calls for this quality. A weak vacillating policy only excites the contempt of the people. If you touch a nettle, grasp it firmly. If proper caution has been exercised in entering upon a case, firmness and fidelity in carrying it forward will command respect.

## III

*Who May Be Subjects of Discipline by the Session.*

1. All the officers of the congregation except the pastor.

*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 2, p. 70, ¶ 1: "The presbytery, in the case of ministers; and the session, in every other case, is the competent authority to commence and finish a process for scandal, unless a reference or appeal be made to the superior judicatory."

2. All church members capable of committing such offenses as are proper subjects of discipline.

*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 1, ¶ 3: "All church members capable of committing such offenses are liable to discipline, whatever station they may occupy in life. Even minors, after they shall have arrived at the years of discretion or after having been admitted to the Lord's table, are, in all respects, equally with those of more advanced years, subject to corrective discipline."

3. Baptized children of the church, though not in full communion.

Doubts have been expressed on this point, but the language of the Book is specific.

*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 1, p. 69, ¶ 3: "As the criminal diffidence and neglect of those young persons who do not choose to make an early profession of the Faith cannot invalidate the obligation arising from the divine law and their own baptism, so it is not to prevent the application to them of that discipline which the Redeemer has appointed for His family."

*The United Presbyterian Book of Government and Discipline*, Part III, Chap. I, Sec. 5, says: "All baptized persons, being members of the church, are under its care and subject to its authority and discipline; and, having attained the years of discretion, are bound to perform all the duties of church members."

#### IV

#### *Offenses Which Require the Exercise of Discipline.*

1. Offenses may be either *private* or *public*.
  - a. Private offenses are such as are known only to an individual; or, at most, to a few.
  - b. Public offenses are such as are generally known; or are known to many.
2. Offenses may be either *personal* or *general*.

- a. A personal offense is a wrong done to an individual, or to individuals.
- b. A general offense is any heresy or immorality having no personal relation, or apart from it.—*United Presbyterian Govt. and Discipline*, Part III, Chap. 2.

These distinctions are important, because the procedure will vary in some respects in reference to these several classes.

- 3. Offenses may relate to either Doctrine, Character, or Conduct.
  - a. An offense in Doctrine is called *Heresy*.
  - b. An offense in Character is called *Immorality*.
  - c. An offense in Conduct is called *Contempt*.

## V

### *Who May Prefer Charges?*

- 1. Any person of good character, whether a member of the church or not.—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. II, Sec. 2, p. 70, ¶ 3.
  - a. No one not of good fame can be an accuser.
  - b. No one who is himself under process for scandal.
  - c. Charges should be cautiously received from an accuser who is not under your jurisdiction.

The reason for this caution is that the person bringing a charge is liable to censure if he fails to substantiate it; but if he is not under your jurisdiction he cannot be held to account in this way. Hence a session must guard its members from outside persecution.—See *Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 2, ¶ 3.

- 2. In private or personal injury the complainant should be the prosecutor; but no person can be compelled to become an accuser (Sec. 3).

3. In public scandals, the session may be compelled to become prosecutor.

“All processes on account of scandals originally private and belonging to the class of personal trespasses must be pursued in the name of the complainant; but, if the scandal becomes public, the Church judicatory is bound to commence the process against one or both parties, rather than tolerate the evil without applying the remedy.”—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 2 and Sec. 4.

## VI

### *Preliminaries to Process.*

1. Use all possible endeavors to adjust the case without process.

On this point Murphy says: “It is extremely difficult at the present time so to conduct a process of discipline as to impart to it any value either to the offenders or to the Church; and when not so conducted it will do harm rather than good. On this account a process of discipline should never be entered upon until it is seen to be absolutely indispensable. Every possible effort to reclaim the offender should first be made in private. It is hardly ever wise for a pastor to encourage the prosecution of a member of his church when the matter is one which is personal with himself.”

This last sentiment I would *underscore*. Pastors have been permanently injured in their usefulness by well-meant prosecutions undertaken in defense of their good names.

2. Not every fault is a censurable scandal.

*The Testimony*, Chap. XXXI, Sec. 2, says: “A scandal is not everything which is sinful or dis-

pleaseth, but something in a professor's carriage which, either in itself, or from its circumstances, may tempt others to sin, expose the Church to just reproach, or mar the spiritual comfort of saints."

The *Book of Discipline* suggests great caution on this point. It says: "The process which is intended to remove scandal, frequently, from the misguided zeal or passion of the parties concerned, generates new scandal demanding Church censure; and in no case is more prudence and delicacy required on the part of the Church officers, to maintain order, to discriminate and to administer promptly due censure with an amiable severity."

"*Due censure with an amiable severity*" is good.

3. Even violations of Church law often can be settled without formal process.

The parties may be invited to appear before session without citation, make their own statement in reference to the offense, and submit to the judgment of session, based upon their own statement of the case. As a pastor I secured the settlement of many cases of that kind in that way. I had cases of sitting on juries, and of voting; but I had also cases of antenuptial fornication, and of drunkenness, all satisfactorily adjusted without formal process; and two decades have proved that the repentance was sincere in every case. Of course, such settlements are not to be made at the expense of the laws of the Church, but by the parties voluntarily submitting themselves to the authority of the session without formal trial.

4. Parties may be required to submit financial difficulties to an arbitration. See *Minutes of Synod*, 1893; *R. P. & C.*, p. 249.

With all these precautions as to beginning process, bear in mind that discipline is a divine institution for most exalted and noble ends; that its proper exercise is not to be shirked, but that it is to be employed with



implicit faith that God will bless his own ordinance to the honoring of His name and the salvation of His people. "It is impossible but that offenses will come, but woe unto that man through whom the offense cometh."

## LECTURE XXI

### INSTITUTING PROCESS

WHEN all efforts for private settlement have failed and it finally becomes necessary to enter upon the judicial investigation of a case, it is of much importance that the session proceed in an orderly way. Instructions on this point will occupy the present lecture.

#### I

#### *Preferring Charges.*

1. In the case of *personal* offenses.
  - a. The accuser must submit his charge in writing.—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 2, ¶ 5.

This requirement is specific and the reasons are obvious. Before the matter can go any further the session must determine whether the case warrants the framing of a libel, and must have the charge in writing in order to pass upon it. If the accuser does not submit his charge in writing, he may afterwards complain that the session did not frame the libel in accordance with his charge. Always insist, therefore, on compliance with this rule.

- b. He must specify the offense, and the time when, and the place where, it was committed.

It will not do to take up some general charge of conduct unbecoming a Christian. Some definite act

must be specified and the time and place designated, so that the accused may have opportunity to know what he has to meet, and how to prepare his defense. Besides, charges are not admissible after a certain period has elapsed.

c. He must give the names of all his witnesses.

The session cannot judge whether the evidence is sufficient to make the charge capable of proof, until they know who are to be called to substantiate the charge. The accuser, therefore, in making the charge, must name his witnesses.

d. He must show that he has complied with Christ's rule.

Matt. xviii, 15-17: "And if thy brother sin against thee, go show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses, or three, every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church."

The Church insists upon obedience to this rule.—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 1, ¶ 5. The session should always inquire whether or not it has been observed; and, if it has not, they should refuse to listen to the accuser until he has complied with this requirement.

The *United Presbyterian Book* says: "In cases of personal offenses, the injured party, whether the offense be public or private, must use the means prescribed by our Lord for bringing the offender to a sense of his error and effecting a reconciliation, before he can be admitted as a prosecutor. Failure to comply with our Lord's direction, by any one lodging an information against another, is itself an offense subjecting the informer to censure."—*United Presbyterian Book of Govt. and Discipline*, Book II, Chap. 2, Secs. 3, 4.

And the *Presbyterian Book* is still more emphatic. It says: "Those who bring information of private and personal injuries before judicatories, without having taken these previous steps, shall themselves be censured, as guilty of an offense against the peace and order of the Church."—*Presbyterian Book of Govt.*, Book II, Chap. 2, Secs. 3, 4.

If this law is rigidly enforced many cases will never go any further. The Scripture warrant for it is so specific that no Christian can reasonably object to its enforcement.

2. In the case of *general* offenses.

a. An individual may be accuser and prosecutor.

Because offenses are either general or public, it does not follow that the charges cannot be preferred by a private individual. Anyone who is competent to bring a *personal* charge is competent to prefer a charge for a *general* offense. There are cases where it may be a most sacred duty to do so.

b. An individual may be the informer, and yet he may decline to be the prosecutor. *Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 2, ¶¶ 3, 4.

If the offense is personal, the informer must be the prosecutor; but, if the offense is general, he may simply submit his information to the court, and leave it to the judgment of the session whether they will take up the case or not.

The *United Presbyterian Book* contains a very wise provision for cases of this kind: "In cases taken up on information, the name of the informer may be withheld at the discretion of the court; but if the innocence of the party accused is clearly made out, the court shall inquire whether the informer acted through malice, or imprudence, or otherwise; and deal with him accordingly." *United Presbyterian Book of Govt. and Disc.*, Chap. III, Sec. 2.

You will find it a not uncommon thing for a person

to come to the pastor with a complaint against a brother for a general offense, accompanied with the request that the informer's name shall not be disclosed. Let him understand that you will not bind yourself not to disclose his identity, that you have discretionary power as to that, and that, even if the name is not disclosed at first, the accuser will be held to responsibility for the truthfulness of the charge.

- c. The court may prefer a charge on the ground of common fame.

In order that a prosecution may be begun on the ground of a *fama*, the following conditions must be found to prevail:

- (1) The session must be satisfied that a *fama* really exists.
- (2) The *fama* must specify a particular offense.
- (3) The *fama* must be widely spread.
- (4) The *fama* must be accompanied with reasonable presumptions of truth.
- (5) The *fama* must not be transient, but permanent.

These provisions are all so reasonable as to require no argument. The *Book* says: "Great caution should be exercised in presenting charges on this ground. Church officers must be especially careful not to create the *fama* which they make the basis of their prosecution."—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. II, ¶ 7.

- d. One knowing himself to be the subject of an injurious rumor may request a judicial investigation for his vindication.

Our *Book* does not especially provide for such a case, but both the United Presbyterian and the Presbyterian Books make such provision.

The *United Presbyterian Book* says: "As, how-

ever, a rumor may exist not amounting to common fame, affecting the character of an individual, the person affected thereby may request a judicial investigation for his own vindication and it may be proper for the court to grant the request.”—*United Presbyterian Book of Govt. and Disc.*, Part III, Chap. III, Sec. 6.

The *Presbyterian Book* is even stronger. It says: “It may happen, however, that in consequence of a report which does not fully amount to general rumor as just described, a slandered individual may request a judicial investigation, which it may be the duty of the judicatory to institute.”

It seems reasonable that a member of the Church should be allowed to invoke the authority of her courts to protect his good name. This must be recognized as a correct principle; however, the occasions for its application are comparatively rare. It is especially rare in the case of a rumor against the pastor. Be too busy for rumor to attack you, and not busy enough to create rumor.

## II

### *Framing a Libel.*

1. It belongs to the court to frame the libel.

No matter by whom the charge is preferred, the framing of the libel, in sessional cases, belongs to the session.

2. A formal libel is not in every case necessary.

The *Book* says: “When the judicatory commences a process without any particular accuser, it is upon the ground of *fama clamosa*, and the charge may be presented in more general terms, but in every other respect the same rules apply as in the case of a specific libel.”

3. In difficult cases the court should proceed by libel.

In all kinds of judicial procedure, the orderly way is usually the shortest and best. If a case cannot be settled without proceeding to trial, it is usually because the accused intends to contest every point. In this case it is much easier for the moderator to proceed under a libel. The points of law and order are more readily perceived.

4. The accused party may demand a libel.

The party placed on trial is entitled to all the advantages, in making his defense, which the law prescribes; and, if he believes that a formal libel will be better for him, it is his privilege to insist upon it.

### III

#### *The Form of the Libel.*

1. It must be specific as to the offense charged.
2. It must state when and where the offense was committed.
3. It must set forth wherein the offense violated Scripture and the standards of the Church.

The language of the libel is: "Contrary to the word of God and the profession of the Reformed Presbyterian Church founded thereon."

- a. After the phrase, "Contrary to the word of God," reference should be made to the particular passages of Scripture which condemn the sin specified.
- b. After the phrase, "And the profession of the Reformed Presbyterian Church founded thereon," reference should be made to the particular statements in the Confession of Faith, Testimony, Covenant, Catechisms, or

Terms of Communion which condemn the sin charged.

4. The libel must bear the signature of the prosecutor, when made by a private person; and of the moderator and clerk when the session is the prosecutor.
5. It must bear the names of all the witnesses.
6. If new witnesses are afterwards discovered, the names must be furnished to the accused and additional time given to prepare for trial.

*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 2, ¶ 6.

*Book of Discipline*, pages 134, 135: *Form of Libel*.

#### IV

##### *Serving the Libel.*

1. The libel is to be placed in the hands of the accused, or left at his residence.—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 2, ¶¶ 6, 12.
2. It is to be accompanied by a citation signed by the moderator and clerk to appear and answer to the libel.—*Idem supra*. After the first citation only the signature of the clerk is necessary.—¶ 10.
3. The citation should allow the accused at least one week to prepare for trial.—¶ 6.

Both the *United Presbyterian* and the *Presbyterian Books* allow ten days to the accused. It is best to allow him all the time he reasonably can ask, in order that there may be no excuse for delay when the time arrives, or ground of complaint when the trial is over.

4. If the first citation is not obeyed, the session must order another in the same form.
5. The time allowed after the second citation is discretionary with the court.



6. The second citation should contain an intimation that the trial will proceed, whether the accused appears or not.
7. If the person cited declare on the first citation that he will not obey it, this shall in no case hinder the issuing of a second citation. There should be no discussion of the matter. The second citation should simply be served.
8. If the second citation is not obeyed, session may either proceed with the trial in the absence of the accused, or it may suspend him for contempt of court.

In most cases the latter course is preferable; it is very much the easier, and it is so manifestly just that it leaves no ground of objection on the part of the accused; while a trial conducted in the absence of the accused is not likely to be satisfactory.

If, however, the session has already some evidence that the accused is guilty, it may be better to take the testimony while it is available and include in the sentence of condemnation, the act of contumacy as well as the original charge.

9. If the accused present a valid reason for his neglect to obey the citations, then the citation shall be repeated *de novo*.—*Id.*, ¶ 12.
10. Citations may be served by any one competent to attend to it.—*Idem Supra*, ¶ 10.
11. The person serving the citations must certify that fact to the session.—*Idem Supra*, ¶ 10.

## V

### *The Citation of Witnesses.*

1. All citations of witnesses, both of the prosecutor and of the accused, are issued and signed by the clerk of session.

2. Each party cites his own witnesses.

In case the session is the prosecutor, the clerk usually attends to serving the citations. But, when the prosecutor is a private person, it is his business to cite his own witnesses. It is always the business of the accused to cite the witnesses for the defense. The clerk of session must furnish the citations for both parties.—*Idem supra*, ¶ 10.

3. Any one may serve the citations of witnesses who will furnish a certificate to the court that he has so done.
4. Members of the Church can be required to attend when cited as witnesses, under pain of Church censures for contempt of court, if they refuse.
5. Those not members of the Church can only be requested.—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 2, ¶ 19.

It is not always easy to secure the attendance of witnesses. People dislike to appear in court, and many who have been talking freely become dumb suddenly when proceedings are begun. An effective way to check a garrulous gossip is to produce your notebook and begin to take down his name and address, and his statements, and intimate that he may be called on to recite his story in court. The refusal to testify when properly called upon by a church court is not only contempt of the court, but is a violation of the ninth commandment which requires: "The maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbor's good name, especially in witness bearing."—*Testimony*, Chap. xxvii, Sec. 3.

6. In case important witnesses cannot attend, their testimony may be taken by delegates sent from the court.

The accused should be notified in order that he

may be present to cross-question the witness. No step should at any time be taken which does not conserve the right of the accused to meet his accusers face to face. A man's character and good name are so sacred that a church court is under obligation to afford him every opportunity to defend them.

7. The session may request some other judicatory, or competent authority, to secure testimony not otherwise obtainable.

When testimony is taken in this way, the judicatory should use its discretion in determining how much weight is to be attached thereto.—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 2, ¶ 18.

## LECTURE XXII

### CONDUCTING A TRIAL

#### I

#### *The Opening of the Case.*

1. ASCERTAIN whether the libel has been properly served and the witnesses cited.

When the court assembles at the time and place appointed for trial and has been regularly constituted, before beginning the trial, it is necessary to know that the preliminaries have been regularly attended to, and that the parties are present in answer to your citation. Then the moderator announces that the session will proceed with the case.

2. The moderator reads the libel, explains the nature of the charge, sets forth the ends of discipline and the present duty of the accused.—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 2, ¶ 15.

This part of the action should be performed with gravity and solemnity. The accused should be made to feel the seriousness of his position when summoned before a court clothed with Christ's authority, to answer for conduct inconsistent with his Christian profession. Care should be taken to remove from his mind all mistaken views as to the ends of Church discipline, and to show him how it is related to the honor of Jesus Christ, to the purification of the Church, and to the salvation of the accused; and he should be appealed to as Joshua appealed to Achan: "My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God

and make confession unto him." At the same time let him understand his rights as a member of the Church to a fair and orderly trial. Never take advantage of the ignorance of the accused to place him in an unfavorable position for his defense.

3. Test the admissibility of the charges.

- (1) The accused has a right to be heard on this point.

When the charges are first laid before the session, before the libel has been framed, the session considers the question of their admissibility. But the formulation of the libel and the citation of the witnesses may develop new questions affecting its admissibility; and, more especially because this is a point on which the accused has the right to be heard, it cannot be regarded as finally settled until this point is reached.

- (2) The matters which affect the admissibility of the libel are:

a. The character of the accuser.

If it can be shown that the accuser is himself of untrustworthy character, or is under charges or censure of the Church, he cannot prosecute the case.

b. The admissibility of the testimony.

There are questions affecting the competency of witnesses, which will be considered later; but objection may be raised on the ground of the incompetency of the witnesses.

c. The indefiniteness of the charges.

The law requires that the charges be specific, and the libel may be thrown out on account of the generality of the charges.

d. The date of the commission of the crime.

The libel must state the date at which the crime was committed, and, if more than one year has elapsed since the facts on which the charge is founded became known to the accuser, the libel must be dis-

missed as inadmissible.—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 1, ¶ 7.

e. Want of a sufficient number of witnesses.

The law says: "Testimony must ever bear a proportion in weight and clearness to the improbability, the magnitude, and the consequences of the scandal; and no person shall be convicted upon the testimony of a single witness however pointed and clear it may appear to be."—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 2, ¶¶ 16-19. *United Presbyterian Book*, Part III, Chap. VII, ¶ 5.

Any one of these five grounds is sufficient to destroy the admissibility of the charges. If the libel be declared inadmissible, all further proceedings cease.

4. Test the *relevancy* of the libel.

(1) The question to be determined under this is whether the charges if proved are censurable.

The libel affirms that a certain thing is a heinous sin and scandal, "contrary to the Scriptures and the profession of the Reformed Presbyterian Church founded thereon"; and then it proceeds to charge that the accused is guilty of this sin because of certain specific acts, committed at a certain time. The question raised as to relevancy is, whether, if these specified acts be proved by competent witnesses, they will sustain the general charge contained in the libel; and whether, the general proposition being true and the specifications being proved, the offense is necessarily censurable.

For instance, the libel might read as follows:

"Whereas, living in an incestuous relation is a grievous sin and scandal, contrary to the word of God and the profession of the Reformed Presbyterian Church founded thereon; yet, true it is that you, John Doe, are guilty of the scandal above stated, in so far as you, the said John Doe, were, on the first day

of November, 1907, united in marriage to Jane Roe, your deceased wife's sister, which being found relevant and proven against you, you ought to be proceeded against by the censures of the Lord's house."

Is this libel relevant? This involves two inquiries. First: Is living in an incestuous relation a heinous sin and scandal? This is necessary because some offenses are not scandals. It being decided that incest is a censurable offense, the second question is: "Is marrying a deceased wife's sister incestuous?" If it were proved that the accused had married his deceased wife's sister, would he thereby be convicted of living in an incestuous relation? In other words, the general proposition that incest is a heinous sin and scandal being admitted; and the specification under it that John Doe had married his deceased wife's sister being proved: is John Doe subject to censure?

(2) On the question of relevancy, the accused has the right to be fully heard.

(3) In opposing the relevancy of the libel, the accused is not permitted to make a plea against the principles of his public profession.—*Book of Discipline, Chap. III, Sec. 2, ¶ 17.*

This third provision is very important. Suppose that in the above case where the specific charge is marrying a deceased wife's sister, the accused denies the relevancy of the libel, claiming that the principle laid down in the *Confession of Faith* and in the *Testimony*, viz, "That a man may not marry any of his wife's kindred nearer in blood than he may of his own," is not Scriptural; and suppose that the accused proposes to appeal from the lower standards to the supreme standard, the word of God: he cannot be permitted to do so, because, in his public profession, he has declared his belief that these subordinate

standards are agreeable unto and founded on the Word of God. When he is libeled for violation of his public profession, he cannot deny the relevancy of the libel on the ground that the profession is unscriptural.

This principle received a striking elucidation in connection with our Church troubles in 1891. See review of a speech of Dr. J. K. McClurkin by Prof. James Dick, *R. P. and C.*, April and May, 1891.

In cases of trials for heresy or for following divisive courses, the relevancy of the libel cannot be challenged by an appeal from the subordinate Standards of the Church to the Scriptures as the supreme standard.

The question of the relevancy of the libel should always be carefully weighed and the Book says: "If, on careful consideration, the charges be found not relevant, all further proceedings must terminate."

5. Interrogate the accused as to the matters of fact.

This refers to the specifications in the libel. The moderator calls upon the accused to stand up, and then questions him as to whether he did the things which are charged in the libel.

(1) If the facts are admitted, the way is open for a decision.

(2) If the charges are denied, the judicatory shall proceed to trial.

## II

### *Taking the Testimony.*

1. The judicatory or either of the parties may require the witnesses to be sworn.

It is not always necessary, but there should be no hesitancy either on the part of the court or of the witnesses to employ the oath if it is desired. "An



oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.”

(1) The moderator administers the oath.

(2) The witness stands and raises his right hand.

This is the Scriptural attitude for taking an oath. Kissing the Bible is expressly condemned in our Testimony. It says: “On no account should he conform to the superstitious practice of kissing the Book.”—*Testimony*, Chap. XXVII, Sec. 3.

(3) All persons present should stand during the administration of the oath.

The solemnity of the act needs to be deeply impressed in its administration.

2. The accused may impeach the character of the witnesses.

(1) The court must hear the objections and put them on record.

(2) The judicatory must receive legitimate proof of their truthfulness.

If the case should be carried up by complaint or appeal to a higher court, these will form proper matters for review.

3. The competency of a witness may be challenged on the following grounds:

(1) Want of proper age.

No certain age can be fixed by law, and the age at which one would be competent to testify would be affected by the nature of the fact to be proved.

(2) Want of the senses necessary to a knowledge of the crime charged.

A blind person could not testify to that which is known only by sight; or a deaf person to that which is perceived only by hearing.

(3) Weakness of intellect.

(4) Infamy of character.

(5) Malice toward the accused.

In regard to this latter, it is expressly provided

that, if required, witnesses, before giving their testimony, are to be, on their oath, purged of all malice against the accused.

If the accused do not challenge the witnesses, it is usually better for the court to admit all, and then judge of the value of their testimony.—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 2, ¶¶ 19-20.

4. The examination of witnesses.

- (1) The witness must state all he knows but cannot be compelled to incriminate himself.  
(See Part III, Sec. 2, ¶¶ 2, 3.)

The method, so common in civil courts, of swearing the witness to tell the whole truth and then refusing to allow him to state fully what he knows of the case, must have no place in the courts of the Lord's house.

- (2) The examination is all conducted through the moderator.
- (3) Either party may object to points in the testimony, and the objection must be placed on the record.

The law says: "Either party may object to the course pursued in examining witnesses, or to a particular question. If the objection is not sustained by the moderator, an appeal may be taken to the court; if not sustained by the court, this fact, with the objection, shall be entered upon the record."—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 2, ¶ 24.

- (4) The entire testimony must be written down as given; then read, corrected, and signed by the witness.

It may not be essential always to write down the questions, but the answers are to be recorded *verbatim*, and the questions if clearness demands them.

- (5) A witness may at any time amend his testimony by a postscript, signed as before.
- (6) Hearsay testimony is never admissible.

- (7) The testimony of a deceased person who would have been a credible witness may be received if proved, but does not have the full weight of direct evidence.—¶ 28.
- (8) A member of the court may be a witness and yet sit on the case.—¶ 29.
- (9) No private knowledge possessed by members of the judicatory may be allowed to influence their decision.

No such private knowledge should exist. The judgment must rest entirely upon the evidence before the court, and it is the duty of every member of the judicatory to make known to the court, as a witness, everything that he may know that is relevant to the case, or that may tend to a righteous decision.—¶ 29.

- (10) Documentary evidence, whether written or printed, must be duly authenticated before it is used.

Ordinarily it should be certified by the affidavit of the proper person, witnessed by an official as sealed instruments are attested.

- (11) Extracts from the minutes of sister judicatories are authenticated by the signature of the clerk.—¶ 25.
- (12) A husband or wife shall not be compelled to testify where the other is on trial.—¶ 20.
- (13) Witnesses should be examined in the presence of the accused.
- (14) They are to be examined by the party introducing them, and cross-examined by the other party.
- (15) Rebutting testimony may be offered by either party.

By rebutting testimony is meant testimony intended to set aside, or modify, the testimony given by witnesses on the opposite side.

I have advised you to use every possible means

to avoid the necessity for judicial process. My advice now is, that, when you are forced to enter upon the investigation of a case, you sift it to the bottom; and let it be distinctly understood that there will be no favoritism, or partiality, or whitewashing, but that you will use every means in your power to get at the facts of the case by legal evidence. The courts of Christ's house are brought into deserved contempt when judicial procedure is not conducted in an orderly and effective way to a definite result either of honorable acquittal or of just condemnation.

## LECTURE XXIII

### ISSUING A CASE

IN the last lecture we followed the steps in a judicial trial to the point where the witnesses have been examined and the evidence is all in. Taking up the subject where we left off, let us consider:

#### I

#### *Hearing the Parties.*

1. The parties speak alternately, each speaking twice.
2. The prosecutor opens, and the accused closes.
3. In the first speeches both parties confine themselves to the record.
4. In the second speeches each one must confine himself to a rejoinder to the remarks of the other.

These reasonable regulations should be strictly adhered to. The most difficult things are:

- a. To prevent the parties from traveling beyond the record in their first addresses.
- b. To prevent them from introducing new matter in their second speeches.

This is especially true if there are facts in their possession which they have not been able to prove by legal evidence, or if any part of the testimony has been ruled out. The attempt to drag it in is almost sure to be made in the hearing. The moderator

should be very careful to see that the parties understand clearly the limitations under which they are to speak before they begin, or there will be complaints of unfairness when they are unexpectedly called to order and refused permission to follow their intended line of remark.

5. The parties may be questioned by the members of the court.

The object of the questioning of the parties is to elicit a clearer understanding of the points of their argument. But the moderator must restrain the members of the court from injecting an argument into their questions.—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 2, ¶ 27.

## II

### *The Removal of the Parties.*

1. This is done by motion.

When the parties have been fully heard in comment on the testimony, and the members of the judicatory have asked all the questions they desire to have answered, a motion is made "that the parties be now removed."

2. The passing of this motion takes the parties from the floor of the court.

The terms have a technical signification, i. e., that the parties are now deprived of any further part in the proceedings. They cannot claim the floor for any purpose, unless recalled by motion of the court.

3. The parties may even be required to retire from the room.

The accused always has the right to be present during the taking of testimony and to meet his accusers face to face; but in canvassing the testimony, the members of the court are acting both as jurors

and as judges and they are entitled to deliberate in seclusion if they deem it more conducive to a just decision.

Questions may arise in settling the value to be attached to the testimony of certain witnesses, or where there has been conflicting testimony, in which circumstances the session should be alone. No injustice, therefore, is done to the parties, when they are asked to retire from the session room after they have been fully heard.

The law on this subject is not explicitly laid down in our book, and, as no digest exists of our judicial procedure, I cannot refer you to specific cases. But the *Presbyterian Book* is explicit. It says: "The judicatory shall then go into private session, the parties, their counsel, and all other persons not members of the body, being excluded; when, after careful deliberation, the judicatory shall proceed to vote on each specification and on each charge separately; and judgment shall be entered accordingly."—*Moore's Digest*, p. 626. A number of instances are cited to show that the rule for the "removal of the parties" is construed literally, not metaphorically.—*General Rules for Judicatories, Presbyterian Form of Government*, Nos. 38, 39.

### III

#### *Weighing the Evidence.*

- I. Points of order are to be decided by the moderator; points of law by the court.—*Book of Discipline*, Part III, Chap. 3, Sec. 2.

It may occur, that, in applying the law to the evidence in order to reach a decision, questions will arise as to the interpretation of the law. The court itself must determine this. A mere point of order

the moderator is competent to decide, but here, as elsewhere, his decisions are subject to an appeal to the court.—*Book of Discipline, Rules of Synod, No. 19*, p. 125.

2. The judgment must be based on the testimony before the court.

The rule says: "No private knowledge possessed by members of the judicatory shall be suffered to influence the decision, as that must be based entirely upon the evidence before the court."—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, ¶ 29.

This rule is right, but it is difficult of application. It is not always an easy thing to divest one's self of preconceived opinions as to the guilt or innocence of the accused. It may compel a court, for the want of legal evidence, to acquit one whom they are morally certain is guilty.

3. Where there is moral certainty of guilt, but not legal evidence to convict, the decision should be: "Not proven."

When you cannot conscientiously say, "Not guilty," you may say, conscientiously, "Not proven."

4. The court, in weighing the testimony, takes account of the credibility of the witnesses.

- (1) The uncontradicted testimony of unreliable witnesses does not necessarily convict the accused.

The accused is held innocent until proved guilty; and credibility cannot be injected into the testimony of incredible witnesses by increasing their number. Twice naught is nothing, and ten times naught is no more.

- (2) Can the accused testify in his own case; and, if so, what weight is to be given to his testimony?

I do not find anything in our book which expressly determines whether or not an accused party may tes-



tify. But Synod has taken action bearing on the question. In the *Minutes of Synod of 1867, Report of the Committee of Discipline*, we find the following:

"No. 16 is a memorial from some members of the Church under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Presbytery.

"They ask Synod to appoint a commission to re-try a given case passed upon by the presbytery. The chief ground on which they rest their petition is the alleged fact that the accused was admitted to testify in his own case, and that his testimony formed equally with that of other witnesses the basis on which the verdict was rendered. The presbytery, we understand, conceded the allegation to be correct. It is the judgment of the committee that on this point the presbytery essentially erred. It is not allowed in our form of process; and, in a criminal case like the present, we are not aware that it is admitted in either civil or ecclesiastical law.

"The committee recommend that a commission be appointed to whom the case shall be referred for adjudication."

Signed *S. O. Wylie, J. L. M'Cartney, A. Wright.*

The report was adopted and the commission appointed. *R. P. and C.*, 1867, p. 227.

*The Minutes of Synod of 1868*, and *R. P. and C.*, p. 205, contain the report of this commission. It contains the following language:

"Two days were occupied in the investigation of the case, and the finding was substantially that, in so far as the charge of rape was concerned, the accused was not guilty; and, in so far as the charge of adultery was concerned, the evidence was not sufficient to justify a legal conviction.

"The want of sufficiency lay in the fact that, whereas there were but two witnesses in the case, the commis-

sion were not satisfied as to the credibility of one of them. The testimony of the other witness was direct as to acknowledgment of guilt upon the part of the accused, and the commission saw no ground to question the veracity of the sworn statement."

The commission, therefore, recommended Synod to hear the testimony and pass upon the case, which Synod did.—*R. P. and C.*, 1868, pp. 209, 210, 217.

In the year 1869, the report of Lakes Presbytery says: "Some of our number insist that our Discipline is inconsistent with the Bible rule, in neither allowing or requiring parties to give testimony in their own case. Synod's deliverance is asked on this matter."—*R. P. and C.*, 1869, p. 230.

The matter was referred to the Committee on Discipline, which reported as follows: "In reference to the request of the Presbytery of the Lakes for advice concerning the admissibility of testimony from parties in their own case, we recommend that this Synod declare that it lies in the discretion of inferior courts to admit such testimony, giving it the weight to which in their judgment it may seem entitled. See *Book of Discipline*, page 76. The judicatory must avail itself of every kind of information accessible to it, the members using their own discretion in impartially and minutely weighing the nature of the testimony before them."

This recommendation was not adopted but was laid on the table till next Synod.—*R. P. and C.*, 1869, p. 210.

In 1870, it was again laid over; but in 1871 it was adopted.—*R. P. and C.*, 1871, page 200.

It would seem therefore that our Synod regards it as competent for parties to testify in their own behalf, the court to decide as to the value of such testimony. This, however, may be modified by the rule contained in the *Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 4, ¶ 7. "In

extreme cases where proof is wanting, an oath of purgation may be admitted, but not urged." The form of the purgation oath constitutes it the sworn testimony of the accused in his own behalf. It is as follows: "I, A. B., now under process before the —, for the sin and scandal of — charged against me, for ending of said process and giving satisfaction to the Church of Christ, do most solemnly declare, before God and the court, that I am innocent and free of said sin; and hereby call the living God, the judge and avenger of all falsehood, to be the judge and witness against me in this matter if I be guilty; as I shall answer to God in that day in which He shall judge the world, by Jesus Christ, and as I hope to be partaker of His glory in heaven."—*Book of Discipline*, pp. 136, 137. You will observe that this purgation oath is only to be admitted "where proof is wanting," and then only at the discretion of the session.

5. Circumstantial evidence may have great weight, but cannot be regarded as conclusive.

It is a fact that, in some cases, circumstantial evidence seems stronger than direct testimony, but it is not sufficient to stand alone. According to the law, even the direct testimony of a single witness, however clear and pointed it may appear to be, is not sufficient to convict.

The *United Presbyterian Book* contains also the following provision: "If the testimony taken during a trial proves a sin properly denominated by another name than that designated in the libel, while the specific charge of the libel must be found 'not proved,' the accused may be found guilty of that which appears in proof; but sentence shall not be passed until further time shall be given him for defense, if he demands it and justice requires it."—*United Presbyterian Book*, Part III, Chap. IV, ¶ 14.

The principle here laid down is no doubt correct;

but the orderly method would seem to be that, when the libel is found to be thus defective, the court should arrest proceedings and amend the libel; and, if necessary, give additional time to the accused; and then issue the case.

## IV

*The Judgment or Decision.*

1. The accused may be acquitted, or found guilty in whole or in part.

The libel may contain several counts; in this case the decision should be made on each count separately.

2. The judgment should be fully entered on the records.
3. The records should embrace the reasons for all decisions, except on questions of order.

The importance of a full and complete record is seen in the fact that, when the higher court comes to review the case, it is guided entirely by the record.—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 2, ¶ 30.

## V

*Fixing the Degree of Censure.*

If the accused is found guilty, the next prerogative of the court is to determine the degree of the penalty. The Book says: "It must be committed to the discretion of ecclesiastical judicatories to apportion censures to scandals. Were a specific censure appointed to each offense, it might tend to prevent the end of discipline by showing to every one who is tempted to sin the price at which he may procure indulgence.

"Cases may also frequently occur, especially when

the process is conducted in the name of individual accusers, in which the offense, although real, may have arisen more from infirmity than criminal design, and in which correction is better obtained by conciliation than reproof.

“The process which is intended to remove scandal, frequently, from the misguided zeal or passion of the parties concerned, generates new scandal demanding Church censure; and in no case is more prudence and delicacy required on the part of Church officers, to maintain order, to discriminate, and to administer promptly due censure with an amiable severity.”—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 4, ¶¶ 5, 6.

1. Five kinds of censure are prescribed.
  - (1) Admonition.
  - (2) Rebuke.
  - (3) Suspension.
  - (4) Deposition.
  - (5) Excommunication.
2. Deposition applies only to officers; all the others apply equally to officers and members.
3. There are degrees of severity in the administration of the different kinds of censure.
  - (1) Admonition and rebuke may be administered,
    - a. Once or more frequently;
    - b. In private or publicly;
    - c. With severity in proportion to the scandal.
  - (2) Admonition and rebuke differ in their natures:
    - a. Admonition consists in tender reproof, warning, exhortation;
    - b. Rebuke consists in setting forth the character of the offense with a sharp reproof for it.
  - (3) Suspension may be for a definite time, or until there is evidence of reformation.

4. The nature and effect of these different kinds of censure, and the form of their administration are set forth in the *Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. 4; Chap. IV, Secs. 1, 2, 3.

## LECTURE XXIV

### REMOVAL OF A CASE TO A HIGHER COURT.

ONE of the distinguishing characteristics of Presbyterian government is the subordination of the lower courts to the higher. Every decision of any Church court, except the highest, is subject to the review of a superior court; and the humblest member in the body may have his case finally adjudicated in the highest court of the Church.

*Proposition:* There are *five ways* by which a case may come under the judgment of the higher courts.

#### I

##### *By Review and Control.*

- I. It is the duty of all inferior courts to present their records to the next superior judicatory, for review, at least once a year.

This is a universal law. If any lower court neglects or refuses to send up its records, the higher court may issue an order requiring it to do so and fixing a time.

Sessions are apt to be careless about forwarding their minute books to presbytery. This is a disregard of an essential principle of Presbyterianism. I charge you, therefore, as pastors to be punctual in submitting the records of your sessions to presbytery. In this way all the judicial proceedings of session come under the review of the presbytery; and those of the presbytery come under the review of the Synod.

## 2. Matters of review.

In reviewing the records of an inferior court, it is proper to examine:

- (1) Whether the proceedings have been constitutional and regular.
  - (2) Whether the record is full and accurate.
  - (3) Whether the minutes are properly authenticated by the signature of the moderator and clerk—a matter of frequent correction.
3. The superior court as a court of review and control may:
- (1) Express disapprobation of the proceedings of the lower court and enter the same on its own minutes and on the book reviewed.
  - (2) It may require the lower court to review and correct its own proceedings.
  - (3) It cannot by the power of review and control reverse a judicial decision of a lower court.
  - (4) If the records of a lower court show unfaithfulness in the exercise of discipline in the case of scandalous sins, the superior court may cite the inferior court to answer for such lack of fidelity.—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. III, ¶¶ 1, 2, 3; *United Presbyterian Book*, Chap. XII, Art. 1.

## II

*By Reference.*

A *reference* is a judicial representation in writing, made by an inferior court to the next superior, of a matter not yet decided.

## 1. Proper cases for reference.

- (1) Cases which the inferior court feels itself incompetent to decide.



- a. Because of the fewness of its members as compared with the gravity of the case; or,
  - b. Because of the relation of members of the session to the parties; or,
  - c. Because of the indefiniteness of the law in its application to the case.
- (2) Cases which are new and with no precedents to guide in ordering.
  - (3) Cases that are peculiarly delicate and difficult.
  - (4) Cases, the settlement of which may establish a precedent of extensive influence.

The influence of a decision may extend far beyond the bounds of a congregation and affect other congregations of the presbytery, or over the whole Church. Such was a recent reference to Pittsburgh Presbytery to determine whether membership in a certain organization is in violation of the Church's testimony as to fellowship with secret societies.

- (5) Cases on which the members of the lower court are divided.

In such a case the decision of the lower court would fail of its moral effect, and might do more harm than good. It might involve some principle which the minority would feel constrained to carry to the higher court by complaint or appeal. The lower court might unanimously agree to refer it to the higher court rather than to issue the case and have it appealed.

- 2. The objects sought by reference.

- (1) It may be simply advice.

When this is the object, the case still remains in the lower court, but the progress of the trial is arrested until advice is obtained from the superior court as to how to proceed.

- (2) At any stage of the trial the entire case may be referred to the superior court for final decision.

- a. By such reference the lower court relinquishes all control of the case.
- b. In any case of reference the members of the lower court retain all their privileges in the superior court.
- (3) Written notice of reference should be given to the parties interested.
- 3. The duty of the superior court in a case of reference:
  - (1) Usually it should give advice when requested.
  - (2) It is not bound to give a final judgment in a referred case.
  - (3) It may remit the whole case, with or without advice, to the court from which it was referred.

Our Book does not encourage frequent use of the privilege of reference. It says: "Such references should be made sparingly and only when absolutely necessary or highly expedient. Ordinarily inferior courts should complete whatever comes before them." —*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. III, ¶¶ 1, 2, 3, 4; *United Presbyterian Book*, Chap. XII, Art. II, ¶¶ 1-6.

### III

#### *By Protest and Appeal.*

- 1. An appeal is the removal of a case, already decided, from an inferior to the next superior court.
- 2. Either of the parties may protest and appeal.

The Book says expressly that *none but parties can appeal*. The United Presbyterian law, however, provides that: "In all cases where the purity of the Church and the interests of truth and righteousness

are injuriously affected by a decision, any member of the court may appeal."—*United Presbyterian Book*, Chap. XII, Art. III, Sec. 3.

3. The protest may be against the whole or any part of the proceedings or of the sentence.
4. The fact of the appeal and the reasons for it must be made known as soon as the party is notified of the decision.

A case may be decided in the absence of the accused. In such a case he is not to be deprived of his right to appeal, provided he gives notice as soon as he is informed.

5. The appeal must be delivered in writing to the clerk of the court within two weeks after notice of appeal.
6. Parties are entitled to such extracts from the minutes as are necessary to make out their papers; these extracts to be made by the clerk.—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. III, ¶ 3, Nos. 1-3.

## IV

### *By Complaint.*

1. A complaint is a statement made to a superior court by a member, or members, of an inferior court; or by any other person, or persons, regarding a decision by which they are aggrieved.
2. The same rules as to time and reasons apply as in the case of appeals.
3. It may result in censure upon the inferior court, or in a reversal of the decision complained of.
4. In most cases the members of the inferior court are entitled to act in the final decision in the superior court.

5. If the complaint charges the lower court with injustice and wrong, its members cannot vote on the question of sustaining the complaint.

The rule reads as follows: "Here, and in cases of appeals, the members of the inferior judicatory are entitled to act in the final decision of the case. This shall not apply to complaints charging the lower court with injustice and wrong."

On this point our law differs from both the Presbyterian and the United Presbyterian laws.

The *Presbyterian Book* says: "Members of judicatories appealed from cannot be allowed to vote in the superior judicatory on any question connected with the appeal." This law is repeated in the same terms, as applying to complaints.—*Book of Govt.*, Chap. VII, Sec. III, ¶ 12, and Sec. IV, ¶ 7.

The *United Presbyterian Book* says: "Where a matter is transferred in any of these ways," (i. e., review, reference, appeal, complaint and declinature) "from an inferior to a superior court, except in the case of reference, the members of the inferior court shall have the right to sit and deliberate, but not to vote."—*United Presbyterian Book of Disc. and Govt.*, Chap. XII, ¶ 3.

Previous to 1863, our own *Book of Discipline* also excluded the lower court. By our present Book, the only member of the higher judicatory who is excluded from voting on an appeal is a member who may be appointed by the court or requested by the appellant to act for him, and who does so act.

The amended rule is clearly right. The underlying principle is that the lower court, in conducting a case, even where the court is the prosecutor, is not to be considered a party, merely, but is also judge and jury; and for many reasons they may be more capable of forming a correct judgment in the case than the other members of the supreme judicatory. To rule them

out of a participation in the final decision might thwart the very ends of justice.

But there is an exception to the law permitting them to deliberate and vote on the case when transferred to the superior court. It says: "This shall not apply to complaints charging the lower court with injustice and wrong."

This, again, is manifestly right, because, if the lower court has been guilty of injustice and wrong, they are thereby disqualified for sitting on any case, and this is a question which should be submitted to the decision of their brethren.

But here, again, the *general* complaint of "injustice and wrong" is not sufficient to disqualify them; but the complaint must set forth wherein the injustice and wrong consisted; and, if it is such as, if proved, would call for censure on the lower court, then the members should be excluded from voting, because they have now become a party on trial, and are brought to the bar of the superior court. But if the complaint did not specify anything involving censure if sustained, but simply an error in judgment, they have as good a right to sit on the case as any other members of the superior court.

For a very clear and able discussion of this subject, I refer you to an editorial by Rev. J. C. K. Milligan in *Our Banner*, 1883, p. 271. An appeal had been brought before Synod from action of the New York Presbytery. The moderator ruled that New York Presbytery could not deliberate or vote on the case. Appeal was taken from the moderator's decision, but Synod denied the appeal and sustained the moderator's decision. Afterwards this article appeared, and the moderator, after reading it, was convinced that his decision had been in error.

## V

*By Declinature or Interlocutory Appeal.*

1. Any one concerned in a trial may decline the authority of the court and appeal to the next higher court.
2. The grounds upon which such declinature may be made are:
  - a. That the court has no cognizance of the case.
  - b. That the court is acting illegally.
  - c. That the court is evidently partial.

If a session proposed to put the pastor on trial before itself, he could decline, on the ground that the session has no cognizance in the case; if it attempted to proceed to trial without deciding on the relevancy of the libel, the accused could decline its authority because the session was proceeding illegally; or, if the session were evidently partial, having prejudged the case or being too closely related to one of the parties, either party could decline its authority.

3. The declinature does not necessarily arrest the process.

The inferior court may, if it sees fit, proceed to issue the case subject to the annulling of its proceedings if the declinature is sustained.

4. If the declinature is not sustained, the party declining must abide by the decision of the lower court without appeal.

It is usually much the safer and better course to allow the lower court to proceed; and, instead of making the objections the ground of declinature, to make them the ground of appeal or complaint.—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. III, ¶¶ 1-3.

## VI

*Miscellaneous Remarks.*

1. Besides these ways of judicial procedure, every member of the church has access to the superior judicatories by petition for redress of grievances.
2. All petitions, complaints, appeals, and remonstrances addressed to a superior court must be laid before inferior courts for transference.
3. The moderator and clerk must certify on the document that it has been regularly transferred.
4. If an inferior court refuse to transfer a petition or other lawful paper, the party has a right to protest against the refusal, and, by virtue of his protest, it proceeds to the higher court.—*Book of Discipline*, Chap. III, Sec. II, ¶¶ 5-10.
5. It is the duty of the moderator to inform parties of the steps necessary to carry up a case.

Of course, a pastor would much prefer not to have cases carried from his session to presbytery. When he feels that the session has acted righteously and judiciously he may seek to dissuade parties from complaint or appeal. At the same time he should recognize their rights, and, in case they desire to exercise these rights, he should, if requested, inform them of the orderly course of procedure.

6. The party carrying up a case must abide by the decision of the lower court until it is reviewed by the higher court.

The failure to do this renders the party liable to have his case dismissed by the superior court for contempt. However certain he may be that the lower court has erred, he cannot take on himself to set aside its decision. The synod of 1891 acted on this principle.—*R. P. and C.*, 1891.

7. No professional counsel is permitted to conduct a case before an ecclesiastical court.

All the Presbyterian books agree on this, and their courts have enforced the rule. In some cases a member of the court may be appointed to represent a party who is not capable of conducting his own case. The member thus employed cannot sit or vote on the case.

\* \* \* \* \*

It would be interesting to follow a case into the superior courts, but the limits of time will not permit us to pursue the subject further. There are usually experienced members in these courts who will take the lead in conducting judicial cases. Precedent is a strong law, and precedent may be studied in the Church records. Make your cases strong in the session and in the presbytery and they will not be carried higher.

Let me close, young gentlemen, by reminding you of the exalted purposes for which Christ, the Church's Head, has appointed her discipline; that its exercise is not to be feebly set aside, but is to be maintained with a dignity and sobriety becoming to the courts of the Lord's house.

"The elders which are among you I exhort who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."—I Peter v, 1-4.



## LECTURE XXV

### THE PASTOR IN THE HIGHER COURTS OF THE CHURCH

THE minister, by virtue of his office, is a constituent member of Presbytery and Synod. It will be the purpose of this lecture to discuss his duties in his relation to these superior courts.

#### I

*The Minister Should Regularly Attend All the Church Courts of Which He is a Member.*

1. He is bound to this by his ordination vows.

One of the queries put to candidates for ordination is: "Do you promise in the strength of divine grace . . . to attend punctually the meetings of the session and of the superior judicatories when called thereunto, judging faithfully in the house of God?" This promise is to be as faithfully kept as any other of these solemn engagements. Murphy says: "The rule of regular attendance should be laid down as inviolable. . . . Duty to God, duty to the Church, and duty to himself, all require the pastor to do his part."

2. Because he has a relation to the whole flock.

The minister's relation to a particular congregation depends upon his installation as its pastor; but, by virtue of his ordination to the office of the ministry, he has a pastoral relation to the whole Church.

Some question the right of ministers who are not

pastors, to sit in the higher courts; and intimations are not infrequently made that professors in the College and in the Theological Seminary, unsettled ministers, and missionaries, home and foreign, are not properly constituent members of the courts.

The *Minutes of Synod*, 1849, p. 131, contains the record of a motion to erase from the roll of the constituent members of Synod the name of one of our ministers, for the reason that he had never been installed by any court of the Lord's house to exercise rule. This motion was negatived and the name of the minister was kept on the roll. The facts were that the minister had been ordained by Pittsburgh Presbytery at the request of the Board of Foreign Missions, to be sent out as a missionary to Syria.

The objection to ministers who have been regularly ordained, but who are without pastoral charge, is utterly without foundation. The ruling power belongs to the ministerial office. By virtue of his relation to Jesus Christ, who is the chief Shepherd, the minister is pastor of the flock.

There are good reasons why presbyteries should not, unnecessarily, ordain men to the ministry, *sine titulo*, i. e., without a call to a particular charge; but, when the court decides that special circumstances warrant such ordination, it is unreasonable to deny the ordained one his right to exercise the functions of the office with which he has been clothed. Our Synod has always adhered to this view of the office.

3. He cannot do his duty as a pastor if he neglects the superior courts.

The pastor is the connecting link between the congregation and the higher courts. It belongs to the presbytery and the Synod to map out the public work of the church. Her educational institutions; her missionary enterprises; her reform measures; her benevolent schemes: all these public interests are under

control of the presbyteries and the Synod. And, besides these, the higher courts exercise supervision over the congregational life in the matter of Sabbath schools, young people's societies, the exercise of discipline and the services of worship.

Now it is not only the duty of the pastor as a constituent member of these courts to bear the full measure of his responsibility, but it is his duty as a pastor to carry back to his people a full account of the plans and purposes of the Church; and, more than that, to translate these plans into the actual life of the people of his charge. A pastor who neglects attendance upon the higher courts cannot be a good pastor in this regard.

The custom of many of the best pastors is to take the first service after returning from Synod to lay before the people a full account of the important business of Synod, preaching from such texts as Psalm xlviii, 12-13: "Walk about Zion"; Isaiah xxxiii, 20: "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities"; Isaiah liv, 2: "Lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes."

4. The pastor needs it for his own personal good.

Pastors who have always lived in the central places of the Church, where they have frequent meetings with brethren, do not realize what advantages they derive from this companionship; and those living in the regions beyond do not know the extent of their losses. But regular attendance upon Church courts is needful for all. The money spent on the traveling fund is not wasted.

## II

*The Minister Should Aim to be Present During the Whole of the Sessions of the Court.*

Murphy says: "Connected with this matter of attendance is another which ought not to be passed over

without a word of notice; namely, that of staying to the close of the sessions. This caution is rendered necessary by the conduct of many who come in perhaps after the opening services, and then, in an hour or two, or at least long before the session's close, go away and leave their brethren to finish the business as best they can. They might almost as well not come at all. The result of this habit is to leave the greater part of the business to be hurried through at the close by a mere handful of the members."

The following suggestions are made:

1. Never withdraw from a Church court without leave of absence.

To do so is in violation of a specific law. *Book of Discipline*, p. 130, Rule 46: "No member shall retire from the judicatory without leave of the moderator; or withdraw from it to return home without the consent of the judicatory." A member may slip out without being noticed by the moderator or by any member of the court, but if he does he is in disorder.

2. Never, unnecessarily, ask to be excused.

Even if you are assured that the court will grant your request, that does not justify your action. You have solemnly vowed that you will attend to these duties; do not break your vow, even by leave of the court.

3. Never withdraw from a Church court in order to show your dissatisfaction with its proceedings.

One of our old ministers, now departed, was noted for his practice of leaving Synod before the close of its sessions. On one occasion he arose, as his custom was, and asked to be allowed to return home. Being asked to state his reasons he replied that he had reasons "both *positive* and *negative*" for desiring to be excused. The request was granted and he passed out. Later, when asked what he meant by "positive" and

“negative” reasons, he explained: “I have an excellent wife and children at home and I long to be with them; that is the positive reason; I am disgusted with the Synod, and want to get away; that is the negative reason.”

Leaving a Church court for negative reasons is wholly unwarranted. There are regular methods of expressing your dissatisfaction with the course of procedure. In all but the supreme judicatory you can protest and complain to the next superior court. And in the highest court you can enter your dissent on the records, with your reasons for it. But to express your disapproval by withdrawing from the court is unjustifiable in any ordinary circumstances, and is in its nature revolutionary.

### III

#### *Every Minister Should Accept His Share of the Onerous Labors of the Church Courts.*

1. He should accept the position of an officer of the court when duly called thereunto.

It is unseemly for a minister to seek his own promotion, but to shirk all responsibility is unfaithfulness. I recall a scene in our presbytery when a young minister was reëlected clerk after having served one term. In a very abrupt manner he resented it as an imposition. Another was named for the place and he peremptorily declared that he had served his term and would not take it again. Another and yet another were nominated with like result. Then the aged pastor of the congregation where the court had met arose and said that if all these young ministers regarded it as such an imposition to be asked to keep the records, he had several excellent old women in his congregation that could do it very well and he would call in one of them. There was no further declining.

The young minister should seek to acquaint himself with the duties of the several offices, and then, when duly called thereto, undertake the work cheerfully and execute it faithfully.—*Book of Discipline*, pp. 121-130, Rules.

2. He should not decline the chairmanship of important committees on account of the labor involved.

There are certain regular committees in presbytery and Synod that impose heavy tasks upon the chairman. A new member naturally shrinks from this position. There may be good reasons for one's declining, but not simply on account of the labor. A young minister might decline to act as chairman of the committee of discipline if he knew that intricate cases or difficult questions were to be referred to it immediately. So with the committee of supplies, on account of his lack of acquaintance with the congregations and mission stations, or the laborers to be assigned; or the committee of finance, because of his ignorance of the financial operations and methods of the Church. In such cases a young minister may ask to be relieved of the chairmanship, though willing to serve in a subordinate place on the committee. But he must not decline on account of the labor; there is ample compensation in the knowledge acquired by serving on such committees.

The duties of the chairman of a committee are:

- (1) To take charge of all the papers or items referred to his committee.

It is the duty of the assistant clerk to place these in his hands; but it is also his duty to look after them.

- (2) To analyze the matters so as to be able to submit them to the committee.
- (3) To call the committee together for consultation and to agree on the general terms of the report on each item.
- (4) To formulate, and to write out, the report.

- (5) To convene the committee to hear, amend, and adopt the report.
  - (6) To submit the report to the court, and, if necessary, to explain and defend it.
  - (7) He should be careful not to overlook the elders on the committee.
3. He should not refuse duties because they are in their nature unpleasant.

There are, occasionally, peculiarly unpleasant duties to be performed. The faithful minister will not refuse to act on account of their unpleasantness. Some one must attend to them, and, if you refuse to bear your share, it implies that you do not love your neighbor as yourself.

Among the most common of the unpleasant duties may be named:

- (1) Commissions to investigate scandals, or settle troubles, in congregations.

It is usually difficult to secure persons who are willing to act on such commissions. The position is undesirable. Not all of the members are going to be required to go into it. In these circumstances it is unseemly for ministers to take very modest views of their fitness to perform these duties. Such diffidence carried to an extreme becomes a sin.

- (2) Acting as prosecutor in cases of discipline.

When the court becomes the accuser, it is usual to appoint one or more of the constituent members to act as prosecutor. It is an unenviable position. The person that fills it almost invariably incurs the temporary displeasure of the accused party and his friends. One may be called upon to prosecute a most intimate personal friend.

- (3) Defending the action of the lower court before the higher court.

This is a peculiarly trying position, especially where the matter involves personalities; and in trials for

heresy; or involving questions on which the Church is divided. The person selected in such cases to represent the inferior court, becomes, for the time being, the target for the shots of the opposing forces; and, if vital issues are involved, the responsibility of the position may be almost overwhelming. I can only say, when such a duty is put to you, stand up to it. Do not study how to evade it, but how to meet it. Such duties demand high qualifications—such as:

- a. Acquaintance with the doctrines, and presbyterial order of the Church. To be a good presbyter the minister must be familiar with the principles of Presbyterianism.
- b. Independence of men, begotten by the true fear of God. No one devoid of this qualification should ever be appointed to deal with serious cases of discipline; especially where the faith and practice of the Church are to be defended.
- c. A peace-loving spirit. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." I put this last because this is the divine order: "*First* pure, *then* peaceable."

The purity of the Church is more sacred than her peace. One who would flinch under fire and who would sacrifice purity for the sake of peace has not the highest qualifications for filling these difficult positions. At the same time it is essential that he be a lover of peace. The man who eagerly accepts these duties just because he delights in conflict, is one who is eminently disqualified for their right discharge.

I therefore counsel these three things:

- A. Cultivate those high qualities which are necessary for the discharge of these difficult, important, and yet unpleasant duties.
- B. Use every right endeavor to avoid the ne-



cessity of their being performed by any one.

- C. When they become necessary and you are lawfully called thereto, accept them as from Christ, perform them in His fear, and depend on His strength for success.

#### IV

#### *The Minister Should Participate Actively in the Discussions and Decisions of the Judiciary.*

It is a misfortune that the business of Church courts is so largely transacted by a small minority of the members.

1. Members should give constant attention to the matters before the court.

It is often remarked to the discredit of our state and national legislatures that the members manifest the utmost indifference, even when matters of great importance are pending. Such an attitude in Church courts is inexcusable. It is very aggravating when members engage in conversation or reading until a motion is about to be put, and then spring to their feet with: "Mr. Moderator, please state the motion," or peremptorily: "I call for the reading of the paper."

2. A member should not speak unless he has something to say.

This certainly does not need to be argued, but experience proves that it does need to be said.

3. The converse of that is not true.

Even if you have something to say, it does not follow that you should speak. If you have already spoken on the subject, give others an opportunity. Perhaps some one else will say it and make it unnecessary for you to rise a second time. It is particularly offensive when a young minister, just after being ad-

mitted to the Church courts, assumes direction of the business.

4. One should be deferential to the rights of others.

It is always becoming for a young member to yield the floor to an aged member who may rise at the same time with himself. The same is true when an elder wishes to speak. It looks well for the minister, who is a constituent member of the court, to give way to the elder, who but seldom has the opportunity and who usually is diffident about claiming the privilege. It is in unusually bad taste for one who has spoken several times on a motion to call out, "Question, question," when others who have not spoken at all are desiring to be heard.

5. When one knows beforehand that he is likely to speak, he should make careful preparation.

You will soon observe in Synod that there are a few men who always receive careful attention and another few who can scarcely obtain a respectful hearing. In both instances it is a case of reaping what has been sown. A deliberative body soon avenges itself on the member who habitually delivers a harangue or a diatribe in place of an address.

Dr. S. O. Wylie was noted for his ability to sway the decisions of Synod. I have heard it affirmed that one secret of his power was his skill in choosing his time to speak. If he knew beforehand that important subjects were to be discussed he prepared with great care and then aimed to make the opening address. If questions were sprung on him unawares he remained silent, carefully noting the arguments on each side, while he prepared himself to make the closing speech.

It is doubtful whether he was conscious of any such deliberate plan, but his faithful attendance upon the Church's interests and his wisdom and skill as a debater resulted in such a command of his resources; and he always knew when to speak. There is a sug-

gestive Scripture passage which may cross your minds even when sitting in a church court: "O that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom."

## V

*As a Presbyter, the Minister Should Keep Constantly in View the Great Interests of the Church and Kingdom of God.*

Our Church courts are too much occupied with tedious discussions of comparatively insignificant matters. This is greatly to be deprecated. Presbyteries and synods should give prominence to the following subjects:

1. The promotion of Christian life and activity in all our congregations.

This will lead to discussions on the state of religion; on the efficiency of the Sabbath-school work; on the proper direction and control of the various societies and organizations of the church; and to helpful conferences on evangelistic work. In all these departments presbytery should exercise its supervision.

2. The cultivation of the territory over which the presbytery extends.

(1) By nurturing the weak congregations.

This is too much overlooked. Feeble congregations are left to themselves. Instead of asking for needed supplies, they send requests for fewer appointments. Too often presbytery permits them to pursue an entirely mistaken policy of retrenchment, and they starve themselves to death. Such congregations should be the objects of constant solicitude.

(2) By keeping a constant outlook for new localities.

Changes should all serve the Church. The develop-

ments in business create new centers of influence where people congregate and should be cared for. Presbyters should be alert and quick to discover the new spiritual needs and to provide for them.

3. Faithful testimony against public sins and in behalf of reforms.

The multiplication of reform societies outside of, distinct from, and independent of, the Church, is a reproof of Church judicatories for their neglect of this important part of their work. It is my opinion that such organizations should be in vital connection with God's great redemptive agency, the Christian Church. When Christians of different denominations desire to unite and coöperate for reform, the organization should be effected by the Church judicatories and should report their work directly to such Church courts.

## VI

### *The Minister Should Carefully Maintain Christian Deportment in the Courts of the Lord's House.*

1. He should be reverential during seasons of worship.

Things to be avoided are such as:

- a. Absence during prayers constituting or adjourning the court;
- b. Attending to matters of business during devotional exercises;
- c. Retiring with committees during time set apart for worship.

2. He should be dignified in speech and behavior.

Presbyters should walk worthy of Christ when they are transacting business in His name. Let us bear in mind the words of Paul the aged to his son Timothy: "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest

to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."—I Timothy iii, 15.

3. He should be courteous.

This is an ornament of grace to the minister of the Gospel everywhere, and is nowhere more becoming than in Church judicatories. Murphy speaks at length on this subject and says: "We make this subject very emphatic because we feel that there is great need for awakening special attention to it. Scenes are sometimes witnessed in Church courts which are a shame and a scandal to religion and which do incalculable harm." Young gentlemen, that is enough.

## VII

### *General Remarks.*

1. Always see to the regular and timely appointment of the elder who is to attend presbytery or synod.

This appointment should be made long enough beforehand to enable him to fill the appointment without unnecessary inconvenience.

2. See that the certificate of the delegate is regularly made out and forwarded in due time.

Disregard of this rule on the part of pastors and sessions causes a needless waste of time in making up the roll. See *Book of Discipline*, p. 134, Form of Certificate; p. 122, Rule 6,—very important.

3. Send in promptly your statistical reports, as required by the superior courts.

Carelessness on this point is the fruitful source of many just complaints and censures on the part of clerks of presbyteries. Let all things be done in time as well as "decently and in order."

## VIII

*Particular Comment on the Pastor's Relation to His Presbytery.*

I have reserved for this place of emphasis what I have to say on a phase of our Church government which has been overlooked. I refer to the duties and the responsibilities of the presbyteries.

If the young ministers of ten consecutive classes graduating from this seminary could be impressed with a sense of the position of the presbytery in the Presbyterian order of government much would undoubtedly be done to restore to the presbyteries throughout the Church that prestige which inheres in them essentially; and, as a natural result, the Synod would be freed from much of that business and supervision and deadening routine which stifle the spirit, shorten the vision, and thwart the power of many of our meetings of Synod. In the matter of Church government, young gentlemen, what is wanting is more vim in the presbyteries. And when the business there is pressed with vigor, Synod will reflect the dignity and peace of the Church's highest court.

That you may understand the importance of the presbytery, let me read you Sections 3 and 4, Article II, of the *United Presbyterian Form of Government*:

"The presbytery is the essential court of the Church in administering its general order. . . . It belongs to the presbytery, by virtue of the official authority of its members, to hear and issue complaints and appeals from Church sessions, and references for advice or adjudication; to admit and have the care of students of theology; to examine and license candidates for the holy ministry; to ordain, install, remove, and try ministers of the Gospel; to examine and approve or cen-

sure the records of Church sessions; to visit particular churches for the purpose of inquiring into their state and redressing evils which may have arisen in them; to organize, unite, or divide congregations; and, in general, to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare and prosperity of the churches under its care."

There is no doubt as to the scope of presbyterial duties and authority. In a former lecture (First Series, Lecture V) in treating of the "Call to the Pastorate," reference was made to the authority of the presbytery in this matter of the call. In order that you may be fully cognizant of the relation that exists between pastor and presbytery, let me quote from the *Book of Discipline*: "Presbytery judges of the necessity of removing a minister from one congregation to another." (Page 108.) The *United Presbyterian Book* is still more specific: "Presbytery constitutes the relation of pastor and people, acting in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, and presbytery alone can dissolve it." Again, "If the presbytery deem it for the good of the Church," a call coming to a settled minister may be presented to him. This, of course, implies that presbytery may refuse to present the call, and this prerogative is frequently exercised.

On the other hand, a minister cannot be removed from one field to another without his own consent.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As presbytery cannot constitute the relation without the consent of the parties, neither can it dissolve it by a mere exercise of authority. (*Book of Discipline*, pp. 108-9.) Both the pastor and the congregation are entitled to be heard before a call from another congregation is presented to him. Hence, in the case of a call on a settled pastor, the question is always asked whether his present congregation has been duly notified. The *United Presbyterian Book* requires that this notification be read from the pulpit two weeks before the meeting of presbytery at which the matter is to be heard. It also provides that "the presbytery shall always enter upon its

This then sums up the relationship between a pastor and his presbytery, and nicely exemplifies that fine balance existing between the authority of the government and the will of the governed, in a Presbyterian form of government. Everything depends upon a rigid adherence to the forms of procedure, and nowhere can this be accomplished so well as through the presbyteries.

What is needed, then, is a live leader in every presbytery throughout the Church. Not a busybody, but a spirit-filled, devoted worker, one who has intelligence enough to understand the prerogatives of Presbyterian government and tact enough to bend the wills of the members to an orderly procedure in all the minor business that comes to hand. And when the presbyteries are conscientiously bearing the burden of routine government, the meetings of Synod will be an uplift and an inspiration to the whole Church.

God grant you, young men, a view of the majesty of the court of God's house and give it you to serve Him there with grace and with power.

minutes the reasons for translating a minister; and, when the act is likely to give much dissatisfaction to his people, a copy of these reasons shall be sent to them by their commissioners."



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### THE THIRD SERIES

“The Covenanter Vision” will be divided into three parts: (1) The Pastor in Relation to the Whole Church and to the Kingdom of Christ; (2) The Pastor in Relation to the World; (3) Distinctive Covenanter Principles, or, Reasons for the Existence of the Covenanter Church.

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